

Growth and Decline: Understanding International Food Aid since 1993.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Abstract

In 1993, international food aid reached a record high level, but by 1997 food aid had fallen to its lowest level in more than two decades. Though the post-1993 *decline* of food aid has been the dominant trend in food aid, there has also been a significant *growth* in food aid during the period in question. This thesis aims to understand the paradoxical, but parallel, growth *and* decline of food aid since 1993 from a neo-Gramscian perspective. The neo-Gramscian approach to international relations is a historically sensitive, non-deterministic Marxist perspective, normatively committed to transformation towards a more just world order. This perspective assists us in understanding the relative freedom enjoyed by the hegemon from the structural and institutional constraints faced by other states. The neo-Gramscian approach is unique in indicating the role of middle powers and international organisations in perpetuating and legitimising the hegemonic order, whereby middle powers strongly support international organisations. The decline of food aid occurred because agricultural surplus availability has remained the most important factor determining food aid levels, with food aid consequently declining as cereal prices increased after 1993. Furthermore, the food aid regime has proved too weak to enforce a severing of the link between food aid and agricultural surplus for most states, particularly the largest food aid donor and hegemon, the United States. The growth of food aid has been the result of the support given to relevant international organisations and agreements by middle powers, despite middle powers initially having been manipulated into participating in the food aid regime by the hegemonic United States. The possible implications of the trends identified in this study for the future of food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa, also enjoy consideration.

Opsomming

In 1993 het internasionale voedselhulp 'n rekord hoogtepunt bereik, maar teen 1997 het voedselhulp geval tot die laagste vlak in meer as twee dekades. Alhoewel die post-1993 *afname* van voedselhulp die uitstaande tendens in voedselhulp was tydens die betrokke periode, het voedselhulp ook *gegroeï* gedurende hierdie tydperk. Hierdie tesis beoog om die teenstrydige, maar parallelle, groei *en* afname van voedselhulp sedert 1993 te verstaan vanuit 'n neo-Gramsciaanse perspektief. Die neo-Gramsciaanse benadering tot internasionale betrekkinge is 'n histories sensitiewe, nie-deterministiese Marxistiese perspektief, normatief verbind tot transformasie na 'n meer regverdigte wêreldorde. Hierdie perspektief help ons om die hegemoniese relatiewe vryheid van die strukturele en institusionele beperkinge en struikelblokke wat deur ander state in die gesig gestaar word, te verstaan. Die neo-Gramsciaanse benadering is uniek in die klem wat dit plaas op die rol van middelslag-moondhede en internasionale organisasies in die stabilisering en legitimering van die hegemoniese orde. Die afname in voedselhulp het plaasgevind omdat die beskikbaarheid van landbousurplus nog steeds die belangrikste bepalende faktor van voedselhulpvlakke is, met 'n gevolglike afname in voedselhulp toe graanpryse gestyg het na 1993. Wat meer is, die voedselhulpregime was te swak om 'n verbreking van die verband tussen voedselhulp en landbousurplus af te dwing met betrekking tot die meeste donateurstate, maar veral ten opsigte van die hegemoniese en grootste donateur van voedselhulp, die Verenigde State. Die groei van voedselhulp is te danke aan die ondersteuning van die betrokke internasionale organisasies en ooreenkomste deur middelslag-moondhede, alhoewel die hegemoniese Verenigde State middelslag-moondhede aanvanklik moes manipuleer tot deelname aan die voedselhulpregime. Die moontlike implikasies van die tendense geïdentifiseer in hierdie studie vir die toekoms van voedselhulp na Sub-Sahara Afrika, geniet ook oorweging.

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List of acronyms

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CSD	Committee on Surplus Disposal
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DES	Dietary Energy Supply
EEP	Export Enhancement Programme
EU	European Union
FAC	Food Aid Convention
FAIR Act	Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IEFR	International Emergency Food Reserve
IGC	International Grains Council
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIEO	New International Economic Order
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1. Problem statement

In 1993, international food aid reached its highest level since the 1960s. By 1997, international food aid had fallen to its lowest level in twenty years¹ (see figure 5.1). The trend in aggregate international food aid is very much a tale of two paradoxical trends. On the one hand, food aid remains a form of agricultural surplus² disposal, which implies a relative disappearance of food aid when agricultural prices rise (as happened over the period 1993-97). However, the strict links between food aid and agricultural surplus have gradually weakened so that, on the other hand, much food aid has been disconnected from its surplus disposal logic, as indicated by the development of a food aid regime that is underpinned by states acting less in their direct self-interest than ever before (with regard to food aid).

Food aid is a supply-driven form of aid, and not, as we would like to believe, demand-driven, especially in terms of aggregate world levels (chapter 3). When agricultural surpluses decrease and prices rise, the incentives to donate food aid quickly fade. With respect to food aid donations, “the passions and the interests (i.e., humanitarianism and economic advantage) seem to spring into political action almost simultaneously when food surpluses prevail. When these food surpluses disappear, and the world trade in food becomes market-oriented, then the passions subside and inward-looking interests of the export nations reappear” (Talbot, 1993:164). It is however too much of a generalisation to regard all food aid donors as equally self-interested (i.e. dumpers of surplus), but, unfortunately, the more altruistic donors account for less than half of the world’s food aid, the more altruistic often being net-food importers themselves. The world’s largest donor of food aid is the USA, but as we shall see, the US is also the most recalcitrant and self-interested donor of all.

¹ In 1993, the aggregate level of world cereal food aid was 15,2 million tonnes, but by 1997 it had fallen to 5,9m tonnes (USAID, 1998).

² When I speak of agricultural surplus, I am largely referring to cereal surpluses, as cereals account for about 90% of all food aid in terms of tonnage.

Despite food aid still generally being a form of agricultural surplus disposal, the record highs reached by cereal prices in 1996 (which indicate a relative absence of surplus) did not result in a total extinction of food aid. Many states continued to faithfully donate food aid, despite high international agricultural prices and often being food importers themselves. This divergence from the more typical surplus disposal logic of food aid requires a look at the role performed by middle powers in the world system. The altruism (or more cynically viewed, the lesser direct self-interest) displayed by these states is consistent with the middle power role, which is dealt with in chapters 2 and 3. The development of a food aid regime (chapter 4) has also contributed to the weakening of links between agricultural surplus and food aid for some states, even though the food aid regime has not done much to solve world hunger, as the statistics mentioned below testify. The weakening of the links between agricultural surplus and food aid is what is generally viewed as the “developmentalisation” of food aid (see Hopkins, 1992; Uvin, 1992).

The reason for lower global levels of food aid lies with donors, and not with recipient demand. The next paragraph will indicate that any decline of food aid is not explained by an abating demand. Demand might strongly influence the distribution of available food aid, but demand is not an important factor in determining overall international food aid levels. This should be borne in mind so as to prevent the reader from overestimating the developmentalisation of food aid. Remember that food aid levels did decline by around 70% over the period 1993-97. Furthermore, this study does not consider the negative effects of food aid on recipient states, particularly the disincentive effects on local agricultural production³, as food aid is something that is not likely to disappear. Food aid seems likely to fluctuate in proportion to surplus availability (even though the developmentalisation of food aid has undermined this link to some extent), and when the need arises, this surplus will be dumped as food aid. Therefore it is perhaps better to secure as high and consistent a level of food aid as possible⁴. However, the world seems a long way from having high and consistent levels of annual food aid.

³ See, for example, Maxwell (1991) and Schultz (1993).

⁴ In 1994, the world's most prominent food aid analyst, Sir Hans Singer, suggested that the minimum level of food aid be raised to 15m tonnes after the Uruguay Round (Raffer, 1997:1904) to counteract the counter-cyclicity of food aid with agricultural prices.

The aim of this study is to understand international food aid since 1993. The understanding which I refer to basically involves drawing out the two paradoxical trends mentioned before, the parallel growth and decline of food aid, as it were. What originally caught my attention about food aid was its sharp decline after 1993. The reason for the decline seemed to lie with the surplus disposing character of food aid. But, this turned out to be too simplistic an answer, as not all states were dumpers of food aid to a similar extent. Some did not even have surpluses to dispose of. Furthermore, food aid did not just disappear when cereal prices reached record highs in 1996. Some food aid seemed to have been disconnected from agricultural surplus. This “disconnection” can be attributed to the development of the food aid regime and the contribution of less self-interested middle powers. Thus, any understanding of food aid could not go without an understanding of both the growth *and* decline of food aid since 1993, the decline obviously being the dominant trend since 1993. Both trends have historical roots prior to 1993, but 1993 has been chosen as the cut-off point as it was during this year that food aid reached its highest point in three decades and also the year that the decline started.

The importance of investigating food aid since 1993 lies in the importance of food aid as a scarce public good per se, against a background of severely declining levels since 1993. Approximately 828 million people are currently undernourished worldwide (FAO, 1998b). Since the early 1990s, the number of undernourished people worldwide has increased both in relative and absolute terms. A study by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that food aid levels will have to increase to 27million tonnes by the year 2005⁵ to merely *maintain* current levels of consumption. Let me bring the importance of food aid closer to home.

⁵ Total cereal food aid amounted to only 6,5m tonnes in 1997.

1.2. Prospects for food procurement in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding food aid)

The need for food assistance is particularly pressing in Sub-Saharan Africa⁶, the only region where undernourishment has increased since 1969 (FAO, 1996a:15). Currently, 210m people live in Sub-Saharan Africa (39% of the region's population is presently undernourished). If current trends persist, two thirds of the Sub-Saharan African population will be undernourished by the year 2007, according to the USDA (USAID, 1999b; FAO, 1998b). There are three conventional ways in which the people within a state can procure the food they need to survive. They can produce it themselves, they can import it, or it can be donated to them by an outside agency. A brief consideration of the (dismal) prospects of the former two food-procuring strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa, will indicate the need for sustained food aid to the region.

In the 1960s, Sub-Saharan Africa was virtually self-sufficient in basic food staples (Watkins, 1996:246), meeting 95% of its staple food needs through domestic production (Stryker and Baird, 1992:416). By the year 2000, Africa is predicted to be able to fulfil in only 68% of its staple food requirements through domestic production (Stryker and Baird, 1992:416). While consumption of traditional staples have declined, non-traditional staples, such as wheat, have compensated for the declining availability of traditional staples, even though only about 40% of the wheat consumed in Sub-Saharan Africa is produced locally (Morris and Byerlee, 1993:737). What is more, cereal imports on the whole have increased by more than 100% since 1973 (Lawrence, 1986:1).

Numerous (infra-) structural factors (have) hamper(ed) agricultural production in Sub-Saharan Africa⁷. However, there seems to be some consensus that the most damaging factor in the decay of agricultural production in Sub-Saharan Africa has been the policies pursued by African governments (Lawrence, 1986:7; Asefa, 1994:24; Stryker

⁶ The focus will be on the Sub-Saharan region as a whole. This obviously ignores the great variances that exist between the different regions and states in Sub-Saharan Africa with regard to their abilities to produce, import or receive food. It also does not take cognisance of the pockets of poverty and hunger that exist within states that should be able to feed its populace on paper. My concern is with the level of per capita food availability for Sub-Saharan Africa, the region being the unit of analysis.

and Baird, 1992:423; Sahn, Dorosh and Younger, 1996:735). Government policies in Sub-Saharan Africa often reflect an urban bias slanted against the rural population (Cheru and Gill, 1997:152; Gibbon, 1996:765; Herbst, 1990:951; Medhora, 1994:301; Riddell, 1992:61), despite the estimation that 80% of the poor in Africa live in rural areas (Killick, 1995:309).

Agriculture featured prominently in the structural adjustment programmes that have been undertaken by (forced upon) many Sub-Saharan Africa economies. Structural adjustment programmes sought to get the African state out of (agricultural) economies, let market forces become a stronger determinant of production, and liberalise internal and external agricultural trade⁸. Unfortunately, Sub-Saharan Africa agricultural production has not improved greatly in recent years. Therefore, the prospects for greater food self-sufficiency and increased earnings through agricultural exports look bleak.

What follows are only some of the criticisms that have been levelled against (the failed) structural adjustment of agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa, many of which hint at the relative inability of Sub-Saharan economies to compete in world markets, even with regard to the most basic of products. The focus on (agricultural) export-led growth ignores that African agricultural exports are often of the environmentally rapacious “extraction type” (Riddell, 1992:63). Promoting economic growth through the export of basic commodities is regarded as a rather limited strategy, as states with similar exports will soon flood the international market (if production increases) with low value-added produce driving prices down (a fallacy of composition), while expensive and higher value-added imports continue to be imported by Sub-Saharan Africa states⁹ (Cheru and Gill, 1997:146; Glover, 1991:180). Furthermore, the prices of primary commodities have been on the long-term decline, thereby weakening the position of Sub-Saharan Africa’s many monocultural economies even further (Jamal, 1994:21). The nature of domestic politics in Sub-Saharan Africa has resulted in export crops being the last sector to be liberalised (Gibbon, 1996:760). The neoliberal

⁷ See, e.g. Ugwuanyi and Obinne (1998:48); Sahn, Dorosh and Younger (1996:722).

⁸ On the structural adjustment of agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa, see Bradshaw and Huang (1991); Gibbon (1996); Riddell (1992); Sahn, Dorosh and Younger (1996).

assumptions of price incentives and associated agricultural production increases have not always held true in practice, as it has underestimated the importance of (infra-) structural deficiencies and their impact on production. Virtually non-existent roads in rural areas, increased fuel costs due to structural adjustment programmes, low levels of technology and the required literacy to employ higher technology, the absence of electricity in many places, inadequate irrigation with the concomitant dependence on the weather have all proven to be stumbling-blocks outside the purview of adjustment programmes (Gibbon, 1996:755; Riddell, 1992:65; White, 1996:797). A further obstacle to neoliberal economic adjustments lie in the low agricultural supply elasticity found in Sub-Saharan Africa, which are lower than anywhere else in the world (White, 1996:797)¹⁰.

Before we proceed, it is important to note an important effect of structural adjustment on African governments, with potentially severe consequences for food security in the region. The patrimonial state in Sub-Saharan Africa has, almost by definition, been associated with corrupt and inefficient government. Importantly however, the patrimonial state has also guaranteed the peace in many of the potentially volatile regions of tropical Africa. Structural adjustment programmes attack the very core of what can rightly be described as inefficient and bloated governments (Bradshaw and Huang, 1991:325; Gibbon, 1996:751; Herbst, 1990:954; Medhora, 1994:301; Riddell, 1992:65; Shaw and Inegbedion, 1994:394). By reducing the redistributive influence of the state, structural adjustment programmes are taking away the very incentive which used to guarantee the acquiescence of community strongmen and their subjects. This has led to increased civil conflict and with Africa's resultant descent into a Hobbesian state of nature, agricultural production can be expected to suffer accordingly (Hoogvelt, 1997:175).

The section above sketched a rather dim picture of Sub-Saharan Africa's ability to raise its food output. Now, we briefly consider Sub-Saharan Africa's ability to import food, and by implication, the general health of the region's economy, as the capacity

⁹ On the glut of tropical products in world markets (which make up two-thirds of Third World agricultural exports), see note 14, chapter 3.

¹⁰ Internationally, the agricultural supply elasticity is on average 0,9, whereas in Sub-Saharan Africa it is between 0,1 and 0,3 (White, 1996:797).

to import food is dependent upon having enough foreign exchange to pay for such imports. In other words, will the economic position of Sub-Saharan Africa improve in order for the region to be able to afford more food imports?

The African economic nightmare is a tragic, but indisputable fact. The causes of the African economic crisis can be grouped into three categories (Glover, 1991:176): Firstly, external shocks and a hostile international economic environment. Secondly, the weakness of domestic economies. Thirdly, bad domestic policies. The dispute is not about these three categories as such, as they are generally accepted, but rather about the explanatory weight that should be appropriated to each. The explanatory weight given to each category of problems also determines the course of action in fixing the problem. Theorists of the left have apportioned relatively more of the blame for the African economic crisis to the antagonistic structure of the global economy. Neoliberal assessments and solutions, as have been adopted by the most economically powerful states in the world and their proxies (the IMF and the World Bank), see the problem as too much inefficient state intervention along with bad domestic policies. They see salvation as coming through a freer market and less state intervention in the economy. The neoliberal solution proffered to the African economies in crisis should be understood within its global context, driven by the liberalising power of capital.

Since the early 1970s, the world economy has undergone important structural changes, with dire consequences for much of the Third World, but especially for Sub-Saharan Africa. Fordist production has internationalised, thereby integrating only a handful of semi-peripheral states (mostly from Southeast Asia) into the core of the world economy (Hoogvelt, 1997:45). Trade has become liberalised, with most Third World economies still exporting commodities of lower added value than those imported by them from core states. The debt crisis and the globalisation/liberalisation of international financial markets have resulted in the flight of capital, new loans and investment from the periphery to the core where investments are safer (Hoogvelt, 1997:77,83). Offering an attractive destination for footloose capital (through high interest rates, social repression, etc.) is one of the few economic strategies left to states whereby they can exert some form of control over their economies. Internationally, national economic and *political* behaviour has come to be circumscribed much more by secretive international financial institutions, such as the

IMF and the World Bank, in which Northern states hold the lion share of voting power, than through the closest thing to a world government, the United Nations. The rise of the “transnational liberal economic order” (Gill, 1990:88) has been accompanied and facilitated by the growth of a transnational elite, and a parallel transnational “proletariat” (Hoogvelt, 1997:58). This transnational elite and its interests have become increasingly disconnected from their national economies. A last important feature of the world economy since the 1970s is the relative decline of US hegemony which it had enjoyed since after World War II. This relative decline of the US to a “minimally hegemonic” position (Cafruny, 1990:106), has been characterised by the hegemon being less intent on managing the system and more on the exploitation and domination of other states.

Hoogvelt (1997:89) argues that most of the Third World (basically the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa) has become “structurally irrelevant”, a fate even worse than being “structurally exploited”. Attempts at integrating Sub-Saharan Africa into the world economy have failed. Hoogvelt (1997:176) reaches the pessimistic conclusion that “Africa is simply too far behind to make a living in the global market. Because of its structural irrelevance to the global economy, any enforced return to global markets as agent of economic discipline can therefore not even be excused on the grounds that the adverse effects of adjustment will be ‘temporary’”. Attempts by development agencies to help the people of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the Third World to achieve “self-reliance” has become void of its previously rebellious connotations. Today “self-reliance” rather refers to a “do-it yourself welfare programme” for those permanently excluded from the world economy (Cox, 1981:155, note 42).

The dismal prospects for Sub-Saharan Africa for either improving its agricultural production or its overall economic position have been noted. International food aid seems to be something Sub-Saharan Africa will be becoming more dependent on in the near future and thereby serves as justification for the focus of this study. The implications of the findings of this study for future food aid will be considered in the concluding chapter.

1.3. Method, ontology and organisation

This study is aware of the communication distorting effects of power relations, interests, history and values on data, concepts and theories in the social sciences. Habermas's "ideal speech situation"¹¹, whereby argumentation which has been rid of communication distorting power relations remains the ideal which is aspired to. According to Habermas, this ideal is supposed and anticipated in all discourse. However, in reality, discourse is not devoid of distortions and Habermas's "ideal speech position" remains purely fictional. Consequently, theory always contains a normative element. Also, Vasquez (1995:227) asserts that "[al]l data are theory-laden". At best then, one can be aware of one's biases and foundational assumptions, substantiate claims with appropriate evidence and be open to criticism from other scholars on all aspects. But, to theorise/analyse non-normatively in the social sciences is impossible. Re-opening the debate on the fundamentals of the major theoretical approaches in International Relations is also not possible in a study such as this, and is seldom done, thereby leading to a certain degree of incommensurability between theoretical (paradigmatic) positions. Claiming to be objective is also an ideological position. This will become clearer in the discussion of Cox's (1981:128-130) notion of "problem-solving theory"¹² (see chapter 2). Such a static view (unintentionally?) favours the *status quo*, serving to obscure and maintain the power relations whereby certain inequalities and injustices are sustained.

Tracing the development of the food aid regime, for example, obviously requires some form of historical analysis. A historical qualitative approach is careful not to sacrifice the desire to present an elegant explanation with an oversimplification. The qualitative historical approach allows for the inclusion of significant (historical) particularities that might otherwise have fallen outside the purview of a more quantitative explanation. In this study a certain theoretical approach (the neo-Gramscian approach) is used inductively, describing and exploring the reasons for the changes which have occurred in food aid since 1993.

¹¹ For a brief discussion of Habermas's "ideal speech situation", see McCarthy (1978:304-310).

¹² For similar ideas, see Habermas on the technocratisation of public life, in Held (1980:263-267).

Most of this study is approached from a neo-Gramscian perspective. The selective application of Antonio Gramsci's ideas to International Relations, originated by Robert Cox, offers us a historically sensitive, transformative¹³ theoretical basis. Neo-Gramscian scholars recognise the relative fixity of social structure, but then still leave room for a historically specific social constructivist role for agency, and a reciprocal view of the relationship between agency and social structure, which allows for the theorising of structural transformation. In chapter 2, the virtues of the neo-Gramscian approach are indicated, in comparison to the problems with liberalism and realism, with regard to how these approaches would address the research problem. Note that the choice in favour of the neo-Gramscian approach was made because of the superior understanding it offers of food aid since 1993. In other words, the potential for addressing the research problem was the main criterion in choosing a theoretical perspective. This does not infer that the neo-Gramscian approach is generally superior, since some theoretical approaches have a greater capacity for addressing certain issues than do others (e.g. realism explains arms-races better than liberalism, but liberalism explains economic interaction better than realism). More generally, the merits of the neo-Gramscian approach to international relations lie in its foundational historicism and its strong normative commitment to change toward a more just world order, as shared by the author¹⁴. However, in my commitment to the scholarly scrutiny of this thesis, I wish to draw attention to the fact that part of the reason for the choice of a neo-Gramscian perspective is paradigmatic (in the Kuhnian sense), as I, the author, cannot be totally disentangled from this study, even though every attempt is made to attain objectivity.

This thesis seeks to contribute to the study of food aid in the following ways: Food aid (in contrast to financial aid¹⁵, for example) is seldom dealt with in International Relations literature¹⁶, nor related to the broader global political economy. Never has food aid been considered by someone employing a neo-Gramscian perspective. The neo-Gramscian approach is extremely useful in helping us to better "understand" food

¹³ See Nel (1999b:62-63) on the difference between "transformative" and "conservative" theories, the difference being basically similar to Cox's distinction between "critical" and "problem-solving" theories.

¹⁴ See note 37, chapter 2.

¹⁵ See section 3.2, as well as figure 3.2, for more on the relationship between food aid and foreign aid in general.

aid since 1993, allowing us to make inferences about, for example, the food aid regime and middle powers that would not have been possible if mainstream approaches to International Relations were being used. Middle powership is occasionally mentioned in passing in food aid literature, but to my knowledge no lengthy discussion of the links between middle powers and food aid has ever been made. What is more, the neo-Gramscian perspective enables us to challenge the fairly benign view held of international organisations in the food aid regime (especially the WFP), as international organisations are shown to be the stabilisers and legitimising agents of international inequality and injustice.

Existing literature on food aid has guided me to a problem-solving grasp of food aid and its intimate dependence on the availability of agricultural surplus. Additionally, the neo-Gramscian approach has been invaluable insofar as it has helped me to understand why some states are less self-interested donors of food aid than others, as well as the international politico-economic context within which the food aid regime functions. The neo-Gramscian approach is also useful in pointing to the power and interests that underlie and shape seeming normality, neutrality and common sense.

Food aid and relevant agricultural statistics were obtained from the documents and websites of official national and international agencies (such as the USAID, USDA, WFP, FAO, IGC, etc.). Data on food aid were also obtained from secondary sources, such as articles and books on food aid. The discussion of the prospects for food availability in Sub-Saharan Africa selectively drew on the vast literature on Africa's economic problems, structural adjustment and agricultural crisis.

States (and international *governmental* organisations) are central to this study. Food aid donations are seen as originating from states. Virtually all the food aid distributed through the world, once used to be the property of governments and their agencies, or, in the absence of government stockpiles, were paid for by states. It is mostly governments that contribute to the primary international governmental organisation concerned with food aid, the World Food Programme (WFP). Furthermore, though

¹⁶ The notable exceptions are Hopkins (1992, 1993b, 1993c) and Uvin (1992).

36% of total food aid was channelled through NGOs in 1997¹⁷ (WFP, 1998), much of this food aid was given to NGOs by states. Over the period 1987-1991, more than 90% of “NGO” food aid was bilateral food aid merely channelled through NGOs (Shaw and Clay, 1993:34). NGOs are playing an increasingly important role in the distribution of food aid on a sub-international level (that is, once it has reached the ports of the recipient country), but this takes place irrespective of global food aid levels and falls beyond the scope of this study. NGOs are therefore important in the distribution of food aid, but have little influence on the overall quantity of international food aid.

Except for the United States, states are seen as unitary actors in this study. In the case of the US, the tremendous influence it has on international food aid levels necessitates a more refined analysis, which takes into account the divergent tendencies of the various US food aid lines. States are viewed as being transnationalised (see chapter 2), whereby

“states now by and large play the role of agencies of the global economy with the task of adjusting national economic policies and practices to the perceived exigencies of global economic liberalism. The structure of power is sustained from outside the state through a global policy consensus and the influence of global finance over state policy, and from inside the state from those social forces that benefit from globalisation (the segment of society that is integrated into the world economy)” (Cox, 1999:12).

In this study, the most important groups of states are the hegemon (USA), traditional middle powers and food aid recipient states. Only food aid donating states are seen as important in shaping the food aid regime. Food aid recipients are acquiescent, but do not play much of a shaping role. This corresponds with the view of food aid as generally supply driven, and not donor driven. The constraining and enabling character of the wider world economy, within which these states have to function, are sketched from a neo-Gramscian perspective. Middle powers and the hegemon fit into the study as the following way:

Middle powers aim to moderate tensions that might threaten the prevailing world order. Aid is a typical way of mitigating stress in the international system. However, middle power altruism is not just the result of the position of these states in the global political economy, but also of dominant national values and constraints on the foreign

¹⁷ The figure was 26% in 1998 (WFP, 1999)

policy elite of middle powers. Further, middle powers are strong supporters of international organisation, which constitutes a passing up of direct self-interest. The altruism of middle powers should be seen in relative terms, and not as something “pure”. As such, middle power altruism can be reframed as a greater negation of direct and short-term self-interest¹⁸ than one would find with the hegemon.

Middle power altruism and their inclination to moderate tensions that might threaten the prevailing world order, stand somewhat in contrast to the posture assumed by the hegemon and premier food aid donor, the US, toward food aid matters. As mentioned, the US is the most refractory of all major donors. Surplus-disposal concerns figure much more prominently in US food aid policy than in that of any other donor state. It will be argued that the hegemon has drawn middle powers into the food aid regime to share the food aid burden (an unenviable task when agricultural prices rise), an arrangement that is especially beneficial to the agriculturally competitive US. This has allowed the US to reduce its role in providing food aid, and in a wider sense, also to ensure some international stability, widen the hegemonic base and universalise arrangements that it benefits from. The US, however, remains central to the food aid regime in two important respects, firstly, as the largest donor of food aid, and secondly, as the hegemon that underpins the current world order. Though the two dimensions of America’s international role cannot be understood in isolation, the research question directs the study into focusing more strongly on the former dimension of US involvement in food aid. In fact, a whole chapter is devoted to US food aid policy (chapter 5). The reason for such a strong focus on US food aid policy is that, remembering the period under investigation, the decline of US food aid accounted for two-thirds of the total decline over the period (1993-96). Between 1993 and 1996, US cereal food aid decreased by almost 70%, whereas European cereal food aid declined by only around 40%. Furthermore, in 1995, the US reduced its commitment to the legally binding Food Aid Convention by 50%. In sum, American food aid donating habits deviate from the ostensibly greater humanitarian concern of other major donors. To think that in the 1960s world food aid was virtually synonymous with US food aid!

¹⁸ In food aid terms this refers to the relative severing of the link between, and dependence on, the availability of agricultural surplus.

Many food aid lines exist under the rubric of “US food aid”. The sizes of donations given through these lines do not oscillate similarly. The two most important food aid lines in US food aid are Title I and Title II of the Public Law 480 (PL480) of 1954. During the period 1955-92, Title I food aid accounted for 70% of total US food aid, but by 1998, Title I had declined to only 20% of the US total which was already much reduced. Title I is very strongly motivated by surplus disposal needs, with market development in recipient states also being a function of Title I. Title I food aid is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which more than hints at the interests that underlie this form of aid. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) administers the other major US food aid line, Title II, which is driven more by altruistic and developmental concerns than Title I, and has actually increased somewhat in recent years. By disaggregating US food aid into its most important lines (two other programmes, Title III and Food for Progress, will also be touched upon), an even more nuanced understanding of (the decline of) food aid can be attained.

US hegemony, is dealt with from a neo-Gramscian perspective (chapter 2). Thus understood, the US enjoys more freedom and benefits from structural conditions in the global political economy than any other state. Given the view of the agent-structure problem held by neo-Gramscian theorists, the US is also the state most able to influence the system within which other states/actors function, particularly noted in the development of the food aid regime (chapter 4). American hegemony further enables it to escape censure and pressure from other states to a great extent. Of all states at the present juncture in history, no state is more able and successful in pursuing its national interests, as articulated in various state-sectoral dyads, than is the US¹⁹. The relative freedom and success of US foreign policy are the reasons for the theoretical underpinning of the chapter on US food aid being more rational choice based, which is an agent-centred perspective, and not very cognisant of structural impediments to unit behaviour.

¹⁹ See chapter 2, and also Buzan (1995:204); Hollis and Smith (1990:7-9).

A neo-Gramscian perspective is particularly useful in better understanding the role of international organisations in the hegemonic order (chapter 4) and ties in well with the typically strong support middle powers give to the process of international organisation. This perspective emphasises the role of international organisations in legitimising and supporting the hegemonic order (Cox, 1981:136; 1983:172), often performing a mere stopgap function, without ever addressing or altering the more fundamental causes of global inequality, injustice and other problems. International organisations are situated within a broader regime, institutionalising at least one aspect of a particular regime. Regime development is theorised along two dimensions, one normative and the other behavioural. In chapter 4, the development of the food aid regime is explicated along the two aforementioned dimensions. Thereafter, the roles fulfilled by the most important international organisations in the food aid regime, in particular the World Food Programme (WFP), toward sustaining the hegemonic order, and benefiting those at the core of this hegemony, will be expounded. Whatever counter-hegemonic tendencies are displayed by the WFP, will be indicated.

As the title of this study indicates, there has been both a *growth* and *decline* of food aid in recent years. This study seeks to draw out these paradoxical elements which characterise food aid. The organisation of this study, given both the growth and decline of food aid is as follows: The *growth* of food aid is indicated mainly in the latter half of chapter 3 (sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3.) where (middle power) food aid less driven by agricultural surplus is considered. This builds on the theoretical treatment of the middle power concept in chapter 2. Chapter 4 traces the development of the food aid regime, which has ensured some consistency in food aid levels. Chapter 4 also notes how the food aid regime, but more particularly the international organisations in the regime, support and legitimate the hegemonic order, thus preventing fundamental solutions to world hunger from being enacted (see also the theoretical foundation laid for international regimes and international organisations in chapter 2). Title II of US food aid (in chapter 5) is another example of the developmentalisation of food aid, albeit that Title II falls under the broader rubric of “US food aid”, which has declined greatly in recent times. The *decline* of food aid is first indicated in the first half of chapter 3, where the general surplus disposing logic of food aid will be shown. The reason for the decline of food aid since 1993 is then located largely with the United

States, the world's largest and most self-interested donor (chapter 5). The reasons why the US is able to realise its direct and short-term self-interest like no other state can, is theorised in chapter 2 (section 2.2.3).

The concluding chapter will provide an overview of the main arguments and findings of this study, as well as point out some of its shortcomings and possible directions for future research on food aid. Finally, chapter 6 will consider the implications of this study for the future food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa, the importance of which has already been inferred. But, it is to the theoretical underpinning of much of this study that we now turn.

Chapter 2 – Some central concepts: A neo-Gramscian perspective

2.1. Introduction

Neo-Gramscian scholars can be classified as Marxist, due to the centrality of production, and the antagonistic social relations engendered by the production process, in their analyses¹. The neo-Gramscian strand of Marxist thought deviates from deterministic Marxism², into what Drainville (1994) has called “*open Marxism*”. Neo-Gramscian theorists recognise the relative permanence of social structure, but then still leave room for a historically specific social constructivist role for agency, and a reciprocating view of the relationship between agency and social structure, which allows for the theorising of structural transformation. Social structure is viewed historically as the result of a specific configuration of the varying interaction between ideas, material capabilities and institutions at various connected levels. “Institutions reflect the power relations prevailing at the point of origin”, even though they can become the focus points in a struggle between opposing social forces (Cox, 1981:135-137). Institutions generally proffer the opportunity to anchor and perpetuate a hegemonic order. Accordingly, the need for force recedes and the inequities sustained by prevailing power relations are obscured. The legitimacy of the hegemonic order is achieved through the co-option of rival groups and the acceptance of ostensibly universal and benevolent norms, ideas and theories that secure the continued material pre-eminence of the most powerful social group(s), though a dialectical approach does not exclude the possibility of the seed of its own destruction being carried by hegemony. In a hegemonic structure, “the power basis of the structure tends to recede into the background of consciousness (Cox, 1981:137). Cox (1981:141) sees nationally based production and the social forces engendered by it as the ultimate source of hegemony, but only arising at certain historical junctures.

There is no such thing as a non-normative theory or position in Social Science, even though it is an ideal that is aspired to. What I find particularly attractive about the

¹ For liberal (economic) theorists, production and economic interaction also enjoy theoretical primacy, but their general view of the consequences of production are more sanguine than that of neo-Gramscians theorists, and all Marxists, for that matter.

neo-Gramscian perspective is its emancipatory potential (George, 1989:274; Sinclair, 1996:14) as well as its ethical commitment to a more just world order (Gill, 1991; Mittelman, 1998:68,73), unlike that found in much critical social theory³. The ethical and emancipatory promise of the neo-Gramscian perspective is enabled by Cox's (1981:128-130) distinction between "problem-solving theory" and "critical theory", which even Waltz (1986:338), appreciates.

Problem-solving theory seeks to solve to immediate problems, fine-tuning prevailing social and power relationships and institutions in which these relationships are manifested, without critically reflecting on the fundamentals of these relationships and institutions. Problem-solving theory is ahistorical in its isolation and law-like solution of a problem. This reflects the conservative bias inherent to problem-solving theory, obscuring the inequalities and injustices behind claims of being value-free and scientific (Cox, 1981:128-130; 1994:101).

Critical theory acknowledges the inescapability of an ideological bias to any theoretical position, and as such does not reject problem-solving theory, but merely requires it to be aware of its implicit normative posture when claiming to be "value-free". Critical theory seeks to escape from contributing to, and legitimising the prevailing unequal social and power relations by reflecting on the origins and development of the current order. Unlike problem-solving theory, it tries not to address problems in the isolation of various academic (sub)fields, but rather aims to provide a more holistic understanding. Critical theory, although lacking the precision of problem-solving theory, claims to provide a more realistic portrayal of the world, as it understands the world as being in constant interconnected, historically bounded flux, such dynamism being the reality of social and political order(s). "Critical theory allows for a normative choice in favour of social and political order different from the prevailing order, but it limits the range of choice to alternative orders which are

² Deterministic Marxism goes under various names, for example, (mechanical) structural Marxism, scientific Marxism and dogmatic Marxism (see, e.g. Gill, 1991:52-58; Drainville, 1994:107-108).

³ For the sake of clarity *Critical Theory* (in upper case) refers to the strand of thought associated with Jurgen Habermas and the Frankfurt School; *critical social theory* refers to the broad field varyingly opposed to modernity, such as the Frankfurt School, post-modern, post-structural, feminist, environmentalist, neo-Gramscian, etc. approaches; and *critical theory* (lower case) refers to Cox's and the neo-Gramscian use of the term.

feasible transformations of the existing world...reject[ing] impossible alternatives just as it rejects the permanency of the existing order” (Cox, 1981:128-130).

Before discussing the weaknesses of the neo-Gramscian approach, let us justify the application of this approach to the research problem by considering how the two major theoretical approaches in International Relations, realism and liberalism, would probably have gone about understanding the decline of food aid since 1993. The inadequacies of these other approaches will be indicated, only with regard to the problem at hand. An extended discussion and comparison of the realist, liberal and neo-Gramscian approaches will not be offered. Hollis and Smith (1990:60), under the influence of Thomas Kuhn, state that “it is virtually impossible to think of a way in which [theoretical approaches in International Relations] could be tested against one another”. Gilpin (1987:41) is also doubtful as to the possibility of rapprochement between the various perspectives and progressive engagement across paradigmatic lines. Some theoretical approaches explain certain phenomena in international relations better than do others, despite paradigmatic incomparability. Our concern is with the adequacy of their understanding of food aid since 1993.

In the first chapter the two strands of understanding food aid since 1993 were noted, namely the decline and growth thereof. In this study the decline of food aid is linked to the drying up of agricultural surplus to dump as food aid, as indicated by high international cereal prices. However, account must also be taken of the “developmentalisation” (growth) of food aid, whereby some donors persist in their donation of food aid, despite not having agricultural surplus to dump. In the following section, the way in which such a two-fold argument could be approached from either a realist or a liberal perspective will be stated, along with the weaknesses of these approaches to the problem at hand.

From a *realist* perspective⁴, the importance of national security in an inherently conflictual world, where external dependence in key economic areas (such as food production) should be avoided, would explain and justify the surplus disposing

⁴ There are many strands of realism, as with most other perspectives. The strand I have chosen as representative of the realist school, is based on the work of Kenneth Waltz (1979), which has also been referred to as structural realism and neo-realism.

character of food aid. Only once states have satisfied their internal nutritional needs should they be concerned with hunger beyond its borders, if at all. The self-interested and fundamentally conflictual character of interstate relations precludes morality from playing a behaviour-inducing role. Morality is useful only insofar it serves to justify self-interested state behaviour, for example, proclaiming the beneficence of food aid when there is agricultural surplus to be disposed of. Reduced food aid donations, when international agricultural prices rise and thus indicating less surplus (as happened after 1993), come as no surprise since states seek to satisfy national demands for food before any other uses for agricultural produce are considered.

How would one explain net-food importing states donating food aid from a realist perspective? The development of international regimes has been one way in which some predictability has been brought to counteract the uncertainty of an anarchic world. Regimes require powerful states, preferably the hegemon, to ensure the stability of a regime, and compliance with its rules. Only under the leadership of a powerful state will the threat of retaliation loom large enough to ensure the obedience of lesser states. Regimes usually favour the hegemon disproportionately (Gill and Law, 1988:39), implying a greater cost for other states. Regimes do confer some normative credibility to regime rules, even if such normative credibility only serves to obscure underlying power relations. The inability to resist the (tacit) threat by powerful states explains why even net-food importing states donate food aid.

What are some of the weaknesses of a realist analysis? Firstly, the view of the state as a unitary, although parsimonious and powerful, is too simplistic for the problem at hand. It does not enable one to theorise divergent interests and goals pursued by different segments of the same state, for example, between the departments of agriculture and foreign affairs on food aid issues.

Secondly, norms⁵ do play a behaviour influencing role, and do not always just serve to justify self-interested behaviour. Admittedly, it is hard to causally connect values

⁵ I follow Nel's (1998:106) example, whereby he sees norms as "moral beliefs that have become so institutionalised in a specific setting that they can be expected to be a significant contextual constraining or motivating factor". This definition captures two connotations of the concept "norm", namely the moral as well as the patterned behavioural elements. Further, the definition recognises that

and behaviour, but normative considerations have an influence on how states behave against other states. Thérien and Noël (1994:552) argue that foreign aid donations are driven by “the same level of state responsibility at the international level as ...at the domestic level” (as manifested in state welfare institutions and policies). Evidence of the influence of domestic values can be found by comparing the aid contributions of *liberal* welfare states (e.g. the USA, Canada and Australia) to that of *social democratic* welfare states (e.g. Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands) (Thérien and Noël, 1994:545-6).

Thirdly, the realist view of power/hegemony places too much emphasis on (latent) relational power. As a consequence, realist theorists have trouble explaining why states willingly contribute to a regime, such as the food aid regime, in the seeming absence of duress and immediate self-interest. In the case of the food aid regime, pressure from the hegemon on other states to share the food aid burden was stronger during the creation years than it has recently been. What is more, in the case of the food aid regime, the participation of the hegemon in the regime has receded⁶. Why then are states eager to donate food aid, despite the lack of agricultural surplus and visible pressure from major powers? The answer ventured in this study lies in the supportive role performed by middle powers in the hegemonic order (in the neo-Gramscian sense), and their concern with managing conflict in the international system, the donation of food aid being one particular method whereby tensions in the international system are assuaged.

Lastly, the realist explanation of why states provide aid as a means of advancing the power and authority of the donor state (Thérien and Noël, 1994: 531) is inadequate. The voluntary channelling of aid through multilateral channels dissipates the influence states can exert through aid, contradicting realist claims that aid is necessarily a way of augmenting state power.

norms are to the benefit of some (“motivating”) and to the disadvantage of others (“constraining”). See also section 4.2.3.

⁶ The USA used to donate more than 95% of total world food aid in the mid-1960s (Hopkins, 1992:234), compared to the 51% of total cereal food aid it donated in 1998 (WFP, 1998).

Liberalism is a wide-ranging term, with many potential applications, associations and meanings. The way the liberal approach in the field of (International) Political Economy is understood in this study is as *economic liberalism*⁷. Political liberalism favours individual equality and liberty, although the emphasis varies (Gilpin, 1987:27)⁸.

Economic liberalism holds a benign view of the free market, which regulates economic interactions between juridically equal individuals who behave rationally in order to maximise material gain. The freer the market (from state intervention), the greater the increase in allocative efficiency, and the subsequent increase in total human welfare, with the caveat that certain public goods be provided (and market imperfections corrected to some extent) by a minimal state. Liberals disagree over the extent to which the state should interfere in the economy. At present, welfare/Keynesian liberalism is in retreat, and those ideas favouring a “night-watchman state” at most, are in ascendance (Cox, 1987:286-288), noticeably in the discourses of powerful international institutions (e.g. the World Bank, IMF, WTO, etc.) and states (e.g. USA, UK, etc.).

The primacy of economics over politics in the liberal perspective has been implied, in contrast to the realist approach where economic considerations are subservient to political/military/strategic concerns. For liberals, man is predominantly an economic animal. Consequently, material wellbeing is more important for liberals than for realists, who are more concerned with survival in an antagonistic and anarchic world, even if it means losing out on absolute gains in wealth⁹. For economic liberals, relations between individuals, persons or firms are informed by an economic rationality which seeks the most efficient allocation of the factors of production, whereby to procure the greatest gain in overall material welfare. The dictates of economic rationality and market efficiency often involve importing certain products from outside the borders of a state, even strategic materials such as military

⁷ Economic liberalism, as described here, corresponds to what Cox 1987 (286-89; 347-53) has called *hyperliberalism*, also known today as neo-liberalism.

⁸ The theoretical tendency of liberal theorists to separate politics and the economy allows for the distinction between economic and political liberalism.

⁹ For realists, relative gains vis-à-vis other states are what is important, not absolute gains that are relative losses to other states.

equipment, oil and food. But, unlike realists, liberals do not fear the resultant interdependence. Instead, they view it as the source of stability and a guarantee against military conflict between states. Increasing interdependence has led to the institutionalisation of much of international life. International institutionalisation provides actors with a more predictable and enabling environment in which to (economically) interact. A good example of the pacifying effects of economic interdependence is the European Union (EU), which developed out of the European Council of Coal and Steel Community, created in the early 1950s. Today, military conflict between the member states of the EU seems preposterous, but would not have seemed far-fetched fifty years ago, if one remembers the conflict-ridden history of Europe.

From a liberal perspective, the nature of food aid as a form of agricultural surplus disposal would not be denied. In fact, economic liberals would see the solution not as more food aid, but less food aid. Agricultural surplus (and therefore most food aid) is the result of inefficient government intervention in agricultural economic sectors, through market distorting devices such as tariffs, export and production subsidies and other support measures for farmers. The complete liberalisation of agricultural production and trade will result in demand for food being met by supply through the market interface.

Answering why some states provide food aid, despite having no agricultural surplus to dispose of, one could argue that that (food) aid aims to correct the shortcomings of the market, which even liberals would admit is not perfect in reality. Aid is the international extension of the way in which states deal with market imperfections on a national level, political liberals would argue. The more redistributive the state (that is, correcting the inequality generated by the market interaction), the more likely it will be to donate aid. In effect, food aid is an international public good (and is often propagated as such), with the result that net-food importing states might feel an obligation not to free-ride on the contributions of other donors.

What are the weaknesses of the liberal understanding of the decline of food aid? Firstly, the (theoretical) separation of politics and economics is artificial, leading to an inadequate understanding of why, for example, states intervene in the economy.

Liberals might point to unemployment levels, and then to Keynesian strategies to stimulate demand, as a possible solution. This might make sense, but it ignores the political pressure that probably resulted in governments implementing Keynesian reforms. Economic policies do not just change because the market dictates it. The political participation of those affected by the market must also carry some explanatory weight. As for food aid, there are strong political reasons why states generate an agricultural surplus (an economic good), as well as for why some states are more willing donors of food aid than others.

Secondly, as Gilpin (1987:27) notices, the separation of the economic and political spheres is an ideological position. There is no natural reason why these two spheres should be separated¹⁰. The policy prescriptions that result from such a view favours mobile capital, to the detriment of more geographically bounded labour, especially in the current *transnational liberal economic order* (Gill, 1990:88; Gill and Law, 1988:50). One could also doubt the seemingly innate logic of the market which liberals assume, informing our economic decisions independent of influences outside the economic sphere. The sway currently held by hyperliberal ideas has not developed naturally. Rather, these ideas have been promoted by powerful interested parties, whose interests they also serve (Gill and Law, 1988:51), although ascribing this process a too great a coherence and intentionality would also be mistaken (Drainville, 1994:116). However, the preponderance of hyperliberal ideas have attained virtual causal influence (Biersteker, 1995:180), so as to appear common-sensical¹¹. Hyperliberal ideas are “ideas backed with power” (Biersteker, 1995:186), courtesy of their utility for hegemonic interests.

Thirdly, liberals have an inadequate view of power in the international system, due to their neglect of the political side of material life. Power is generally viewed as relational, involving “a focus on behaviour in the making of decisions over which there is an observable conflict of...interests, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation” (Lukes, 1974:15). Consequently, the

¹⁰ For an argument in favour of the “separation of the spheres”, see Gagiano and Du Toit (1996).

¹¹ In Gramscian terms, hyperliberal ideas have moved from being a contested “collective image” toward the realm of “intersubjective meanings” (Cox, 1981:136). See below for a more lengthy discussion of these two concepts.

constraining/enabling influence of normative/ideational and structural forces on actor behaviour is undertheorised. This results in the liberal view of institutions and market interactions being rather ignorant of the power relations that shape institutionalisation and economic interaction.

Finally, despite being a wonderful analytical tool, the market (as interface between supply and demand) has been as much of a problem in the satisfying of human needs as it has been the solution. The liberal concern with aggregate increases in human welfare ignores the inequality in bargaining power, as well as the inequality of transaction outcomes. The assumption is that if the demand exists, the market mechanism will result in supply meeting demand. A distinction must however be made with regard to demand. When liberals speak of “demand”, they are in fact referring to “*effective demand*”. Effective demand involves the ability to pay for what is supplied, regardless of the surfeit of supply, provided that there is not a shortage of supply. The widespread existence of hunger and malnourishment in the world suggests a great demand for food. Yet, this demand remains unmet, often due to political reasons one must admit, but also because many of these people do not have the money to meet the price asked, even when excess supply exists (as is often the case with agriculture).

The neo-Gramscian approach is of a different order than (neo)realism and economic liberalism. (Waltzian) realism¹² and economic liberalism are both static and ahistorical, unable to account for and theorise global structural transformation. The lack of a transformative vision renders these two approaches as inadequate as the theoretical inspiration behind a project of fundamental global change. Instead, economic liberalism and realism are consigned to effect the incremental change characteristic of problem-solving theory¹³. Although problem-solving theories generally contain elements of critical theory, and vice versa, the neo-Gramscian approach lies toward the “critical” end of the spectrum.

¹² For Cox’s depiction of (structural) realism as a problem-solving theory, see Cox (1981:130-135; 1996:49-59).

¹³ The practical utility of realism and economic liberalism has not been lost on policy-makers. The prominence (and self-fulfilling character) of realism during the Cold War and economic liberalism in the current *transnational liberal economic order*, as both guide to action and analytical device, has not

The principal, though somewhat implicit, concern of this study is with world hunger, and the persistence of the problem amidst tremendous riches. The consideration of changing food aid levels seems admittedly like a typical problem-solving concern. In this regard, Cox (1981:129) states that

“as a matter of practice, critical theory, like problem-solving theory, takes as its starting point some aspect or particular sphere of human activity. But whereas the problem-solving approach leads to further sub-division and limitation of the issue to be dealt with, the critical approach leads towards the construction of a larger picture of the whole of which the initially contemplated part is just one component, and seeks to understand the processes of change in which both parts and whole are involved”

The solution to world hunger is not seen as more food aid (even though it might come to play an increasingly important role). More fundamental change is (was) required (it might be too late) for much of the South to dig itself out of the depths it is currently in. Food aid is a useful means of obfuscating this need for fundamental change, by smoothing over some of the harshness of global nutritional inequality.

Fundamental change, with respect to drastically reducing world hunger, would entail less antagonistic conditions for Third World agricultural production (as well as for general economic recovery). Yet, in recent decades much of Third World agriculture (especially in Sub-Saharan Africa) was decimated by subsidised agricultural exports from the wealthy North, from behind their highly protected domestic agricultural sectors. Northern agricultural subsidies and protectionism are extremely important in explaining the trouble much of Southern agriculture is in today. Of course, the foolish economic policies of many governments in the South should not be discounted. What prevents these states from the South that are being plagued by hunger to not perform better in the current more open agricultural trade system? Firstly, the damage done to agricultural production capacities in the Third World cannot be mended overnight and might very well be permanent. Secondly, and more fundamentally, the dominance of the North in agricultural trade has been firmly established (especially with regard to temperate products, such as cereals). Northern states, and especially the US, have captured an increasing share of international agricultural markets, with the market for

been accidental. These two theories have served to legitimate and obscure inequality, injustice and lopsided power relations in the world.

many products (e.g. maize) having become quite oligopolistic¹⁴. Meanwhile, many Third World countries have become net-food importers, where once they were net exporters of food. Thirdly, in instances where Third World states are able to compete in international agricultural markets, it is often in markets for flowers, tobacco and other speciality products for finicky Northern tastes. The implication is that such agricultural exports do little to increase global food supplies, take up land that could have been planted with food crops, and often benefit mainly wealthy landowners, with little financial or nutritional benefit for other citizens of the state from whence these products are exported¹⁵.

Cox's notion of critical theory is not unproblematic, even though its potentialities are superior to those offered by problem-solving theories, such as realism and economic liberalism. Neo-Gramscian theorists are incisive critics of how global inequality is maintained (as well as the concomitant inability to overcome inequality), identifying many aspects of international life that contribute towards maintaining these inequalities. Neo-Gramscian writers find support for the hegemonic order in the ideational sphere (the dominance of hyperliberal ideas), in socio-cultural life (the global spread of American/Western consumerist culture), in political arrangements (polyarchival democracy), in the economic realm (the liberalisation of the world economy), and so forth. While I do think that neo-Gramscian writers are quite accurate in their depiction of how the aspects above maintain (growing) global inequality, they are rather coy in their theorisation of alternatives and what a preferred world should look like. For instance, with regard to the ideal political arrangement, is Fukuyama (1992:xi) not perhaps correct in stating that "the ideal of liberal democracy could not be improved on"? Robinson (1996b) would disagree. Yet, he tries, rather unconvincingly, to get away without identifying a specific alternative form of political organisation on the national level. Robinson (1996b:624) argues that "the polyarchival definition [of democracy] competes with concepts of popular democracy. Although, in distinction to polyarchy, *there is no fully elaborated theory of popular democracy*" (my emphasis). Neo-Gramscians hardly get beyond the commendable, but

¹⁴ See note 24, chapter 5.

¹⁵ Many of the issues dealt with in this paragraph, will be treated at greater length in chapters 5 and 6.

pragmatically rather vacuous notion that a preferred world order should be more just and equitable. Things are just not that black or white.

A possible way out of escaping the absence of an alternative vision is to accept critical theory as useful for exactly what its name suggests, being critical, but also to accept its lack of guidance on practical issues. The distinction between problem-solving theory and critical theory is useful on an abstract level, as it assists us in identifying how ideas become ideological (backed by interested power) and appropriated as justification for behaviour. However, if critical theory (and its ethical commitment) were to remain merely critical, and not propose practical ways in which to effect change, what is its use? It is impossible not to consider current structures of order, and how to deal with them. No matter how subversive one's critical theory, it will sooner or later have to consider existing arrangements, and therefore become problem-solving. One could argue that critical theory should remain detached from everyday concerns, so as to carve out a position to be assumed by the organic intellectuals of the new historic bloc. But, it is impossible to assume a position if one does not know what that position is. Critical theory is therefore of limited use as a guide to practice, but is very useful as an analytical instrument. However, the distinction between the two types of theory remains easier to maintain in relative abstraction.

Attendant to the neo-Gramscian inability to provide viable alternatives to the oppressive organising principles of the current world order, is the tendency to depict these dimensions of transnational control as more coherent, unified and deliberate than is necessarily the case. For example, neo-Gramscian theorists are charged with overestimating the coherence of hyperliberalism, the degree to which the world economy is a deliberately planned and organised process, and the extent to which international structures of authority act on behalf of capital (Drainville, 1994:110-114). One should rest assured, there is no capitalist "conspiracy" in the world, the scale is simply too vast. However, examples of elite collusion do exist (Gill, 1990; Taylor, 1999), but one would be mistaken to argue that they "manage" the world economy. The fact of the matter is that the structural features of the world economy do much of the "managing" itself, independent of intentional human intervention. Capital mobility, liberalised trade and the internationalisation of production are all

faits accomplis, and benefit (transnational) capital greatly. Where the structural features of the world economy do not shepherd national policy-makers into decisions amenable to the interests of capital, the hegemony of neoliberal economic thinking leaves states hardly able to think of alternative economic strategies, in any case¹⁶.

Drainville (1994:111) argues that neo-Gramscian theorists present "[t]he neoliberal concept of control...as the political project of transnational money capital" Drainville's (1994:116) conclusion is that neo-Gramscian theorists "underestimate the partial, hesitant and fragmentary nature of neo-liberalism...Neo-liberalism is not a constituted project implemented in the world economy". Drainville is probably right in his depiction of neoliberalism as having developed somewhat accidentally and haphazardly (and thus less deliberately) than he accuses the neo-Gramscians of claiming. Be that as it may, hyperliberal ideas remain the dominant strain of economic thought, whether its dominance is self-fulfillingly assured by the structural characteristics of the world economy, through the exertion of power from the core states in the world economy, or through its virtual causal influence¹⁷.

The neo-Gramscian approach offers a rich understanding of how global order is maintained and (vaguely) suggests possible avenues for fundamental change, through a selective application of some of Antonio Gramsci's ideas to international relations. In the rest of the chapter, Gramscian inspired concepts that are deemed central to this study are elaborated. Criticisms levelled against the neo-Gramscian approach are addressed where they pertain to the concepts under discussion. Although Gramsci is the original source on which much of the conceptualisations below are based, he did not write much about international relations, per se. Neo-Gramscian writers have

¹⁶ The South African ANC government's neo-liberal economic strategy (GEAR) seems to be a case in point.

¹⁷ Cox (1987:261) identifies the Chilean coup of 1973, as one example of "how recalcitrant Third World governments are ultimately removed by violence if they do not conform to minimum standards of correct world economy behaviour". The war waged against the *Sandinista* government of Nicaragua (following the revolution of 1979) by the US government through their proxies, the *contras*, is yet another such example. In the case of Nicaragua, civil war lasted for almost a decade, ravaged the country, and led to the election of a right-wing president, Violetta Barrios de Chamorro, in 1990, whereby "correct world economy behaviour" was nailed down.

selectively adapted Gramsci's ideas and applied them to problems of world order (Cox, 1983:162)¹⁸.

In the rest of this chapter, four aspects considered to be central to understanding the decline of food aid since 1993 are investigated from a neo-Gramscian perspective. We will examine the role of middle powers in the global political economy; the function of international regimes and organisations; the hegemonic order and the relative position of the US within it, and a neo-Gramscian approach to the agent-structure problem.

The importance of understanding the role performed by middle powers in the hegemonic order becomes clearer when one recognises the reasons why middle powers give food aid, and how these reasons differ from those of the United States, the largest food aid donor. Food aid, on the whole, is motivated by the need for agricultural surplus disposal, with altruism largely relegated to a rhetorical justification of such self-interest (specifically in the case of the US). For middle powers, the mix between *non-surplus* disposal reasons and *surplus* disposal reasons for donating food aid is weighted more in favour of the former. Food aid, for middle powers, is more of an assuaging instrument in the global cauldron of unlimited wants and needs, than it is for the US, fulfilling a role that they have, in part, been manipulated into by the hegemon.

In the section on regimes, I elaborate on the development of regimes along normative and behavioural dimensions, and its connections to hegemonic power/influence. International organisations are understood as the initial embodiment of at least an aspect of a broader regime, legitimising and obscuring the inequalities sustained by global hegemony. The importance of this section lies in the need to understand why

¹⁸ Germain and Kenny (1998:4,13) doubt whether the neo-Gramscian approach to international relations comprises a "viable interpretation" of Gramsci's ideas, whether Gramsci's central concepts can be "internationalised" and decontextualised, given that Gramsci's writings hardly extend beyond the state level and was written in Fascist Italy of the 1920s and 1930s. Neo-Gramscians have never claimed to be strict interpreters of Gramsci. Their primary aim is not to accurately portray Gramsci, but to better understand world order and its various dimensions. The imputed "bastardisation" of classic texts is an inescapable practice in Social Science. Think of how Marxist writing has deviated (and developed) from what Marx originally wrote. More provocatively perhaps, consider the quip that "Western philosophy is mere footnotes to Plato".

the food aid regime, and more specifically the WFP, have not prevented the decline of food aid, or at least have made greater strides toward overcoming world hunger

The importance of the US as food aid donor, and the need to account for American intransigence and self-interested behaviour on issues of food aid, justifies a look at the broader position of the US in the world order, and its relationship to that hegemonic/world order. Although aspects of a reconfigured hegemonic order are demonstrated, the US remains the state most central to hegemony, and as such enjoys relatively much freedom from regime and structural constraints. The US is also the state most able to shape the normative and institutional framework in order for it to agree with its interests, as it has done in its manipulation of the food aid regime.

Very closely related, and central to understanding the manoeuvrability of the US in the global political economy, is the neo-Gramscian treatment of the agent-structure problem. This section sketches the background against which relative US freedom of action should be understood, as well as the relatively less room for pursuing self-interested goals enjoyed by middle powers. The incapacity of the Third World to secure a food aid regime more amenable to their interests is implied by the portrayal of the neo-Gramscian "solution" to the agent-structure problem. Structure will be viewed as both a constraining and enabling factor, varying according to where states find themselves in international hierarchies. It is to this study's understanding of middle powers and the roles they play in the hegemonic order that we now turn.

2.2. Neo-Gramscian conceptual tools

2.2.1. Middle powers

Categorising states as middle powers is a problematic exercise. Wood (1990:72-78) has come up with a fluid but "manageable" group amounting to around 20% of the states in the world. Cox also favours a fluid categorisation, and even discusses the state with the second largest economy in the world, Japan, in middle power terms. Cox (1996:242) argues that "the middle-power role is not a fixed universal, but has to be rethought continually in the context of the changing state of the international

system". We follow Cox's lead and identify middle powers according to the *roles* they play in the world economy, rather than according to some arbitrary quantitative demarcation. To negate some of the fuzziness of the term "middle power", it is proposed that we distinguish between *traditional* middle powers and *emerging* middle powers¹⁹. Though some overlap exists between the distinguishing characteristics of these two groups, two fairly clear camps can be discerned.

Traditional middle powers, such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada and Australia enjoy some of the highest per capita incomes in the world and are stable social democracies. Virtually all the citizens of traditional middle powers are deeply integrated into the world economy, with their states falling clearly in the North (core). For this type of middle power, geographical location is nowadays not a significant factor in accounting for its international role and influence. Although some counter-hegemonic sentiment does exist in traditional middle powers, it does not involve a total subversion of the world economic order, as these states typically prefer the status quo, by which they are best served.

On the other hand, the national per capita incomes of *emerging middle powers* (e.g. Brazil, South Africa, India, etc.) hover around the middle income bracket, with many of these states exhibiting tremendously unequal distributions of wealth. Such inequality indicates, firstly, that large sectors of emerging middle power societies have not been integrated into the world economy, and secondly, the semi-peripheral status of these states. Given the relatively greater integration of these states into the world economy, compared to other states in their physical proximity, many emerging middle powers have been identified by the North as proxies for the expansion of liberal capitalism. These states have democratised recently, and as yet do not have stable democracies. The relative international influence enjoyed by these states is attributable more to their regional pre-eminence, than in the case of traditional middle powers. It is the regional identification and connections of these states that have often fostered a strong counter-hegemonic tradition (e.g. Pan-Africanism in Africa and the *dependencia* writings of some Latin American scholars), though such subversive

¹⁹ This study considers only the role played by traditional middle power in the food aid regime, as the contributions of emerging middle powers, as donors, are negligible. Thus, the terms "traditional middle power" and "middle power" are used interchangeably.

fervour has been tempered by economic dependence and transnational elite alliances with the North. Our concern however lies with traditional middle powers, as they are the ones that give significant amounts of (food) aid.

While the middle power role involves many behavioural niches, middle powers generally seek to manage or pre-empt international conflict, by smoothing over differences between states to ensure “a more orderly world system” (Cox, 1996:243), multilateralisation being a particularly useful way of ensuring such stability. The general goal of ensuring a more stable world order results in middle powers performing various, more specific actions, such as peace-keeping, mediation and conflict resolution, heading “independent” commissions of investigation, donating aid to Third World states, and so forth. The great propensity of middle powers for giving aid to the Third World states is the niche of their behaviour that concerns us here (Cooper, 1994:3; Pratt, 1990:14). Traditional middle powers, such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada and Australia, are large donors of aid (in terms of their per capita GDPs) to Third World states, as has been mentioned. In 1994, out of all states, Norway donated the highest percentage of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the Third World, followed by Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands. France ranked highest of the major powers, higher than Canada, with the latter beating Germany and the United Kingdom (UK). Australia ranked fifteenth, ahead of Japan and the US, but lower than Germany and the UK (UNCTAD, 1996:25).

Middle power proclivity for giving aid can be explained by various factors on various levels, such as foreign aid being the internationalisation of the socially entrenched welfare and humanist values expressed through their states and foreign policies (Lumsdaine, 1993:121; Therien and Noël, 1994:534); economic and political (and military) interests (Schraeder, Hook and Taylor, 1998:294); and attempts to provide leadership and demonstrate independence on specific issues (niches) (Cooper, 1995; Pratt, 1990:15). The problem with these explanations is that they are easily contradicted, as the same state sometimes gives aid for altruistic reasons, and sometimes for self-interested reasons. A neo-Gramscian explanation allows us to locate more general, non-exclusive reasons for middle powers being such generous donors of aid at three junctures, namely the structural position of middle powers in the

global political economy, the constrained influence of middle power foreign policy elites, and the manifestation of dominant societal values in and through the foreign policy of middle power state-societal complexes.

The structural position of middle powers dictates that they support the hegemonic order, but, in turn its behaviour is also shaped by the hegemonic order. Middle powers are too weak to unilaterally shape global organisational arrangements and, at best, seek to minimise risk to themselves and to manage conflict, and to support the process of international organisation with an eye on long-term predictability and stability. Generous aid donation is one way of realising the above-mentioned aims. One way through which some stability has been achieved is the linking of the middle power role “to the development of international organisation. International organisation is a process, not finality.... The middle power’s interest is to support this process, whether in the context of a hegemonic order or (even more vitally) in the absence of hegemony” (Cox, 1996:243). Practical concerns are important to consider when explaining middle power support for multilateral institutions, whereby informational, bureaucratic and implementation costs for middle powers are reduced, thus preventing duplication and unnecessary expense. As a matter of fact, the small size of middle power aid (in absolute terms) and the inability to achieve an “economy of scale”, steers middle powers into using the economies of scale provided by international organisations. Such pragmatism contributes to the stabilising and legitimising role most international organisations play in the hegemonic order. Pragmatic considerations also do not explain why middle powers are often stronger supporters of an international organisation than the hegemon, despite the latter often having played a vital role in the creation of the international organisation. Furthermore, international organisations offer middle powers a forum through which to exert their influence, given their lack of (structural) power on a global scale (Pratt, 1990:15). Cox (1996:243) argues that

“[t]he rules and practices and ideologies of a hegemonic order conform to the interests of the dominant power while having the appearance of a universal natural order of things which gives at least a certain measure of satisfaction and security to lesser powers.... The [hegemonic] order does not usually need to be enforced by direct violence or threat of violence on the part of the founding power. Middle powers may play a supporting role in such a hegemonic order”.

While Cox does not idealise the state (in the Hegelian sense), prevalent domestic social values do find some expression in the state and its foreign policy, and specifically foreign policy altruism in the form of aid. Van der Westhuizen (1998:438) concurs that middle power approaches to the global order, and its role within it, is partly influenced by “the nature or complexity of the dominant values, social forces and institutions embedded in their state-societal complexes”. Lumsdaine (1993) argues that domestic views on and concerns for justice, equality and poverty are transferred to the international sphere. Traditional middle powers are typically social-democracies, in which a strong relationship between domestic social spending (which indicate national concerns with justice, equality and poverty within the state) and aid levels have been found, even though not all middle powers give aid to the same degree (Lumsdaine, 1993:121). Altruism, therefore is one of the motivating factors in middle power aid, more so than for *liberal*-democratic states such as the US, where the *social*-democratic tradition is much weaker. The question may be asked whether traditional middle power concern with global justice and equality is so great that these societies identify more with the counter-hegemonic project than the hegemonic? Even supposing that middle power societies regard themselves as counter-hegemonic, a mollification of these national counter-hegemonic sentiments occur through the *status quo*-friendly interjection of foreign policy elites between dominant national values and the eventual articulation of middle power foreign policy.

Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990:57) trace the gradual development of normative support for the international policies imposed by the hegemon, identifying the particularly important part played by middle power foreign policy elites. Such normative support legitimises hegemonic interest maximisation and ensures the continuity of whatever behaviour has been induced by the hegemon. These two authors provide an incisive description of the way in which states other than the US (read: middle powers) come to accept, and gradually view as legitimate the way in which the US originally prodded them to share the food aid burden in the late 1960s. Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990:57) describe this process as one of “positive inducement”, whereby

“the hegemon initially uses economic and military power to induce elites in smaller states to change their policies, but the process eventually leads to legitimisation. At the outset of interaction hegemonic power is exercised...through coercion and inducements. The hegemon uses traditional power resources to induce compliance with its principles of order and

leadership. Elites in secondary nations, with fewer resources at their disposal, adjust their policies accordingly. It is only later that the normative order, into which the secondary nations have been forced or induced to participate, comes to be embraced as rightful... The conformity of secondary nations begins only hesitantly. Elites in those nations may have very different views concerning the organisation of international relations. It is only after a time that beliefs in the normative virtues of the system emerge... Two factors provide the impetus for legitimisation in the positive inducement model. First, entering into a subsidiary relationship with a hegemon requires compliant behaviour and, consequently, a diminution of de facto political sovereignty. Participation in the system thus threatens to undermine a [secondary state's] domestic legitimacy. The problem can be mitigated if the public of the secondary state sees the hegemon as legitimate. In other words, elites may embrace and espouse the norms articulated by the hegemon in order to enhance their own domestic legitimacy. Second, elites in secondary states may face a degree of cognitive dissonance because the policies they implement may not correspond with their beliefs. This dissonance can be reduced if the norms that guide policy come to correspond more closely to practice."

Middle powers play an important role in maintaining the legitimacy of the hegemonic order, contributing to the "buying off" of potential threats to the system. An important instrument, through which middle powers acquire international influence, but at the same time stabilise the current world order, is international organisation.

2.2.2. International regimes and international organisations

The generally accepted definition of regimes is Stephen Krasner's (1983a:2), whereby regimes are "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge". From this definition, it is useful to disaggregate the foundations of regimes into normative and behavioral components. The normative foundations of regimes encapsulate the values, norms, principles, ideas, ideologies and theories that enable mutual understanding and coordination among a diversity of actors. The behavioural foundations of regimes refer to the (patterned) action of actors in an issue-area of the global political economy²⁰. Although the normative leg of a regime precedes the development of a behavioural leg (Keohane, 1989:4), persistent patterned behaviour does assume a "normative significance" of its own (Krasner, 1983a:9, 18). Behaviour and the normative order that accompany a regime affect each other. In practice, it is considerably harder to

²⁰ The types of regimes envisioned here are "material" regimes. Material regimes concern economic goods and how the trade, distribution costs and production of these goods are arranged internationally. This differs deliberately from security regimes (e.g. NATO), as "high politics" works according to a logic that resemble a realist worldview, whereas with "low politics", norms and absolute gains are more important.

distinguish the effects of norms on behaviour, and vice versa. The normative implies (a) preferred course(s) of action, whereas established behaviour (e.g. stopping, or not stopping, at a red traffic light) acquires normative weight. A change in the behavioural aspect of regimes (rules and procedures) is merely a *change within* the regime, whereas an alteration in the normative bedrock amounts to a *change of* the regime itself (Krasner, 1983:3-4). As will be discussed later, the normative basis of regimes is to be found in the hegemonic order, with the implication that a change in the nature of hegemony will result in a change of the regime. Strange (1983:345) asserts that “[a]ll those international arrangements dignified by the label regime are only too easily upset when either the balance of bargaining power or perception of national interest (or both together) change among states who negotiate them”. Strange might overestimate the propensity for change in international power relations, but she is correct in identifying the self-interest behind international regimes.

Cox (1981:136) identifies two Braudelian levels of shared understanding, which allow for the construction of the normative foundations of regimes, namely *intersubjective meanings* and *collective images*²¹. *Intersubjective meanings* are those ideas which seem universal and timeless for all people at a particular time, even though these ideas do change over the ages. An example of an intersubjective meaning is the organisation of all people under some juridically defined state. Intersubjective meanings are objective in the sense that, firstly, these understandings hardly change over the span of a human life, and secondly, these ideas are very seldom the foci of normative clashes. One could identify the universalisation of the Western notion of the state (or even of democracy) as a normative project, but the length of such a project, coupled with the fact that in the long run we will all be dead, places the contestation of such a long-term venture beyond the pale of deliberate subversion.

Cox (1981:136) identifies more contested and mutable ideas as *collective images*.

“Collective images...are differing views as to both the nature and the legitimacy of prevailing power relations, the meanings of justice and public good, and so forth. Whereas intersubjective meanings are broadly common throughout a particular historical structure and constitute the common ground of social discourse (including conflict), collective images may be several and opposed. The clash of rival collective images provide evidence of the potential

²¹ Braudel would identify intersubjective meanings as the ideational component of the *longue durée*, whereas collective images correspond more loosely to the *conjunctural* perspective of time and change. See Helleiner (1997) for an application of Braudel’s ideas to economic globalisation.

for alternative paths of development and raises questions as to the possible material and institutional basis for the emergence of an alternative structure”

In a hegemonic order, the clashing of “rival collective images” occurs less often than in a non-hegemonic order. In other words, much of the subjective, socially constructed norms and understandings come to be viewed as universal and objective (that is, more like intersubjective meanings), with their contestability increasing as hegemony weakens. In a hegemonic order, the power bases (of which dominant understandings form part) that underpin a regime fade into the “background of consciousness” (Cox, 1983:168). The seemingly universal notions about an invisible hand that governs the economy and the superiority of Western culture (Gale, 1998:272) have expedient material consequences for the hegemon, most directly for its economic elite. The preponderance of ideas associated with hyperliberal economic hegemony, almost by definition prevents the articulation of alternative arrangements, framing action in terms that favour the hegemon (Cox, 1996:518). We have sketched the normative underpinning of regimes. Let us now turn our attention to the behavioral foundations of regimes.

Notwithstanding that international regimes do not exist as ideals or essences prior to their emergence (Young, 1983:95), some normative correspondence between actors is necessary to accommodate their interaction around a certain international issue-area, patterned behaviour and the development of an international regime out of it. Young (1983:98-101) identifies three ways in which international behaviour can be patterned, preceding the development of a regime. Social institutions, such as regimes, can arise either spontaneously, through negotiation, or through imposition. In spontaneous orders, “subjects’ expectations converge to a remarkable degree in the absence of conscious design or even explicit awareness” (Young, 1983:98). Negotiated orders involve greater intentionality to establish co-operation and explicitness on the terms of the agreement. Imposed orders can take two forms. “Overt hegemony” occurs when a dominant state explicitly forces weaker members to conform to the behaviour proscribed. “De facto imposition” refers to a manipulation of incentives for subordinate states to establish an order advantageous to the hegemon. Young (1983:102) does mention that the three ways in which regimes develop are not mutually exclusive, nor need the mix of growth factors necessarily stay the same, which allows for a dynamic view of regime development.

Young (1983:101) is adamant that imposed orders be understood in terms of power. Young (1983:105,108) is also aware that underlying power relations are important in the development of spontaneous and negotiated orders, with the benefits derived from co-operation falling disproportionately toward the hegemon. Continuous exertion of power by the hegemon is regarded as unfeasible in sustaining a regime (Young, 1983:101). What is required is the development of a greater normative and cognitive consonance of subordinate powers with the professed higher principles attached to the regime by the hegemon, as Young (1983:101) briefly mentions. By more states internalising the (hypocritical) normative justification for a regime, the regime acquires greater legitimacy, with the result that the power relations that underpin a regime recede from consciousness. Spontaneous international regimes arise with a tacit understanding of the relational power possessed by other participants. Such a tacit understanding already restricts the spontaneity of regime development. Similarly, in the case of negotiated regimes, negotiations are entered into with an informal understanding of the power hierarchy between states, which biases the eventual agreement in favour of the hegemon.

A useful addition to Young's analysis is a broadened view of power, closer to a neo-Gramscian position. A neo-Gramscian view of power includes the ideational/normative constraints that accompany the material bases and interests of the specific hegemonic order, legitimising such an order:

“The rules and practices and ideologies of a hegemonic order conform to the interests of the dominant power while having the appearance of a universal natural order of things which gives at least a certain measure of satisfaction and security to lesser powers.... The [hegemonic] order does not usually need to be enforced by direct violence or threat of violence on the part of the founding power” (Cox, 1996:243).

Such a normative order facilitates and assists the internationalisation of the ideas and values that accompany a regime, lessening the need for sustained coercion, an untenable situation in the long run (Young, 1983:101). Organic intellectuals play an important part in linking and promoting the normative justification of the material arrangement of the hegemonic order, that is, they assist in “cement[ing] the links between structure and superstructure” (Gill, 1990:51).

One can get a better idea of the power that underpins regimes when one considers the following problem: Leonard Cohen sardonically sang "I have read the Bill of Human Rights, and some of it was true". The problem raised here is not so much of why regimes exist in some areas of international relations and not in others, but why some regimes are stronger than others. Explaining why regimes develop in some areas and not in others is problematic given the impossible task of categorising and describing behaviour that is not significantly patterned. Keeley (1990:15) notes that the issue-area dealt with in an international regime is "a construct within an issue network, with the principle of construction being disputable". In other words, an issue-area such as food aid is contained within the competing, hierarchical but flexible dynamics of broader issue-networks such as humanitarian assistance, (agricultural) trade, Third World development, et cetera. Although Cox does not imbue these ontological constructions with a timeless universality, he does argue that "ontologies are parameters of our existence...they are not arbitrary constructions; they are the specification of the common sense of an epoch" through which people understand, live and organise their lives (Cox, quoted in Sinclair, 1996:8).

Regime strength can be understood in terms of the extent to which actors forego defection in search of short-term benefit by heeding regime rules. Regimes, especially initially, correspond greatly to the (material) interests of the hegemon. Regimes therefore tend to inflict greater costs/adjustments on states other than the hegemon. Regimes that closely correspond to the interests of the hegemon, are embedded in the normatively and materially strong national civil society, but which has been spread throughout the world, being the closest approximation of a "global culture" that exists. A regime that strays from merely corresponding to the hegemonic interest (i.e. becoming more autonomous from the hegemon), needs to be underpinned by an alternative socio-political base, a new historic bloc as it were. "The national context"²² remains the only place where an historic bloc can be founded, although world-economy and world-political conditions materially influence the prospects for such an enterprise" (Cox, 1983:174), as the New International Economic Order (NIEO) found out in the early-1980s²³. What has been implied is that regime strength is dependent

²² There is disagreement on this. Drainville (1994:121-124) argues that an alternative hegemony should be constructed in the world economy itself, rather than being relegated to the national level.

²³ See Augelli and Murphy (1993).

on either the support of the hegemon, and its ability to ensure that other members behave according to regime rules, or on the support of a greater proportion of alternative (counter-hegemonic) socio-political forces in international society. There are no strong regimes of which the hegemon is not a member, and in the more successful and influential regimes (e.g. the international free trade regime), the US plays a prominent role, even if this role involves little more than the perceived threat of American power (retaliation) if things do not go according to the hegemon's liking. Note that the hegemon's attitude towards certain regimes is not fixed, its attitude is normally dependent on its self-interest, as initially articulated by domestic political groupings.

Food aid is an international public good. Without it, the world would be generally worse off. Snidal (1985:586-590) argues that the leadership provided by the hegemon in the provision of a public good need not be benevolent. In fact, the hegemonic state can "tax" weaker states into providing public goods to such an extent that the benefits received by the lesser states may be less than the benefit derived from the public good. Weaker states will continue to accept their exploitation by the hegemon as long as the costs of being exploited are not exceeded by the costs of overthrowing the hegemonic state (Snidal, 1985:588), a position that admittedly assumes a high degree of state rationality and perfect information.

In reaction to Puchala and Hopkins's (1983:86) rather open claim that "regimes exist in all areas of international relations" Nayar (1995:144) adds the following three delimiting qualifications to the concept "international regime": Firstly, the influence of the regime should be detectable, independent of the power that underlies the international system in which behaviour takes place. Otherwise, a regime would just be a reflection of the international system. Secondly, regimes must be shown to constrain self-interested behaviour. Thirdly, regimes must be shown to persist after shifts in underlying power relations. Nayar's qualifications seem to underestimate the correspondence of regimes with hegemonic power and interests. Following is an amendment to Nayar's qualifications, so as also to allow for a dynamic view of regimes.

Krasner (1983b:357) argues that powerful states create regimes to augment their interests. This makes Nayar's (1995:144) first stipulation, that regimes should be seen as influential independent of underlying power relations, problematic. Regimes, particularly at creation, largely mirror hegemonic interests, implying a minimum of adjustment for the hegemon. However, regimes and underpinning power relations are not likely to change at the same speed (Krasner, 1983b:357), as Nayar (1995:143) also recognises. The presence of "lags" (the persistence of regimes, despite altered power relations and interests) suggests that regimes assume some independence. But, in reaction to Nayar's second qualification, this still does not mean that regimes (are able to) constrain all states equally. Nayar's third qualification, that regimes must be shown to persist in spite of shifts in underlying power relations, is less problematic. Even one of the biggest cynics insofar as regimes are concerned, Susan Strange (1987:555), notes that

"regimes are more that the international institutions set up to administer or facilitate multilateral co-operation, though international institutions like the GATT or the IMF often reflect as well as serve the regime. The word *regime* embraces the customs and habits of behaviour that, together with the formal agreements and institutions, provide a measure of continuity and stability in relations of states and of other transnational actors".

Regime persistence (or "lag") after a change in the underlying power interests is a reflection of the actual existence of a regime. The assumption is that, at creation, regimes basically reflect hegemonic interests. Previously we have implied that it is hard to distinguish patterned behaviour, which points to the existence of a regime, from the way in which hegemonic power shapes the behaviour of lesser states irrespective of the presence of a regime. Once the interests of the hegemon change, and the hegemon subsequently does not try to mold the behaviour of other states in the same way it used to, but lesser states still behave in compliance with "regime" regulations, we can say with more certainty that a regime exists. In other words, when hegemonic power recedes, withdraws, or is exerted to bring about a different outcome, but the behaviour of other members remains the same, a regime clearly exists. It should be recognised that a regime does not hold the same disciplinary sway over the hegemon. Krasner (1983b:360) explains such "lags" as a result of custom, established practice, uncertainty and/or the inability to perceive of an alternative, preferable arrangement. One can visually depict "regime" outcomes using two

variables, plotted on two axes. The first variable estimates congruence with direct²⁴ hegemonic interests. The second variable estimates the extent to which non-hegemonic states continue (or can be expected to continue) to behave in accordance with regime rules (see figure 4.1).

What then is the difference between international regimes and international organisations? An international organisation²⁵ explicitly institutionalises at least one aspect of the broader regime. The WFP, for example, deals with multilateral food aid, whereas the organisation does not have much influence over bilateral food aid allocations, although there are attempts at co-ordinating bilateral and multilateral food aid. Various international organisations may be concerned with one regime, as for example with the food aid regime, where institutions such as the WFP, FAO, CSD, IGC, GATT/WTO, are all at least tangential to the food aid regime. By institutionalising convergent expectations in a given area, a yardstick for judging divergent behaviour is set. Institutionalising international behaviour²⁶ seems like a step in the right direction, as it reduces uncertainty, and the concomitant co-operation ostensibly leads to a positive-sum gain.

Incisive criticism against such a sanguine view of international organisation has been levelled by neo-Gramscian scholars. Young's (1983:108) analysis of regime development has already pointed to the bias inherent to patterned international behaviour, whereby powerful states are favoured. Within such a biased regime, the hegemon normally initiates the creation of an institution to regulate an aspect of the global political economy (Cox, 1983:171). The creation of an international organisation is "a means of stabilising and perpetuating a particular order. Institutions

²⁴ The specific mention of *direct* hegemonic interest in reference to short-term and narrow self-interest, in contrast to more indirect hegemonic interest whereby the system benefits, and therefore the hegemon too, but there is little direct gain.

²⁵ When I speak of *international organisation*, I am referring to *intergovernmental* organisations (IGOs). Where necessary, I will indicate other forms of international organisation, as identified by Keohane and Murphy (1992:871). IGOs are more pertinent for the overall research problem, namely that of explaining the decline of food aid. Much of the food aid distributed by NGOs originally comes from states. IGOs are the chief stockists and distributors of food aid on an international level, whereas NGOs generally take care of domestic distribution, i.e. once food aid has been delivered to recipient countries.

²⁶ Caporaso (1992:603) identifies multilateralism as more than the formal organisation of the world, but as a normative project as well, "a belief that activities ought to be organised on a universal basis for a "relevant" (author's disclaimer) group".

reflect the power relations at the point of origin and tend, at least initially, to encourage collective images consistent with these power relations” (Cox, 1981:136). “International institutions embody rules which facilitate the expansion of the dominant economic and social forces but which at the same time permit adjustments to be made by subordinated interests with a minimum of pain” after first securing the compliance of other powerful states (Cox, 1983:172).

International organisations are dynamic creations. Though international organisations reflect “the power relations at the point of origin”, they do also “take on their own life” (Cox, 1981:136). Little oversight of the day-to-day functioning of international organisations exists, especially as long as these institutions do not significantly deviate from major power interests (Keohane and Murphy, 1992:883). At a minimum then, some independence is possible. Over the longer term, and beyond mere conveyed bureaucratic autonomy, international organisations perform their hegemonic function by reflecting and legitimising the hegemonic order, facilitating its expansion, and assimilating potentially counter-hegemonic elites and ideas (Cox, 1983:172).

But, are we to accept the international organisations as mere legitimisers of the hegemonic order, or can these institutions become the breeding ground for a counter-hegemonic project, as suggested by Gareau (1996) and Nel (1999a)? Can organisations such as the General Assembly, the OAU, UNCTAD, and so forth, be the vanguard institutions in the counter-hegemonic assault on the growing inequality and injustice that characterises the current world order?²⁷ I think that at best, these organisations are doomed to securing incremental change (war of position²⁸), leaving

²⁷ I am silent on much of what Schechter (1997:22) calls emerging multilateralism which is “comprised of a number intergovernmental institutions whose structures and organisational ideologies diverge from those established in the immediate post-WW II era and during the height of the cold war; international non-governmental organisations numbering in the tens of thousands, working independently or in concert with other non-governmental actors, states and intergovernmental organisations; and so-called new social movements”. The popular conception of NGOs is that they are generally more concerned with the plight of the poorest 80% of the world than are most politicians, but it should be borne in mind that these organisations do not have any official mandate from those with whom their concern lies. The lack of democratic accountability and a political mandate undermine the seriousness with which non-governmental contributions are treated. Where NGOs can be useful is in the strengthening of civil society in the Third World, thereby assisting in the development of an alternative socio-political basis from which to effectively oppose the current hegemonic order.

²⁸ See Cox (1983:164-5) and Femia (1981:50-55) for more on *wars of position and movement*.

the origins of global inequality and injustice in tact²⁹. What are the reasons for such pessimism, apart from the already mentioned hegemonic roles performed by international organisations in maintaining the hegemonic order?

Firstly, the extremely strong civil society supportive of the hegemonic order³⁰, and the weakness of civil society in the South, will prevent South-dominated international organisations from actually governing internationally, presuming (the very generous presumption) that South-oriented international organisations suddenly assumed great centrality in issues of global governance (an approximation of the war of movement). The prospects for a war of position seem just as dim. A war of position requires a strong, but alternative basis of support in international civil society, which is in turn dependent on the development of a counter-hegemonic historic bloc on a national level somewhere in the world. The growth of an alternative strong civil society is undermined by the increasing global inequality, which is resulting in the destruction of civil society in the South through war, disease, hunger, poverty and illiteracy. An alternative international civil society has an almost definitional lack of access to material and ideological resources vis-à-vis those possessed by the hegemonic transnational elite.

Secondly, the lack of a clear vision of the organising principles of a counter-hegemonic world order (Cox, 1981:150), apart from saying it should be more just and equitable, renders the South much like a Hollywood character who answered, upon being asked what he was rebelling against, "Whadda ya got?". Waltz (1986:340) also points to this weakness, when, in reference to Cox's notion of critical theory, Waltz says "I read in...Cox only what such a theory might do rather than what the theory is". The counter-hegemonic project runs the risk of merely becoming the rubric under which divergent emancipatory endeavours are grouped, defining itself in terms of the hegemonic discourse. The counter-hegemonic lack of an alternative vision contrasts strongly with the clear fundamentals of the current hegemonic order, namely neo-

²⁹ See Augelli and Murphy (1993) for an example of how the potentially counter-hegemonic NIEO was thwarted in procuring greater global influence for the South.

³⁰ One should not overemphasise the social rootedness of transnationalist capitalist institutions and elites in the (civil) societies whose interests they supposedly advance (Drainville, 1994:124). Societies in the core states of the world economy are developing their "own internal South" (periphery) (Cox, 1994:107), which are negatively affected by hegemonic arrangements, practices and policies.

liberal economics, liberal democracy (polyarchy), conspicuous consumption, popular Western culture and “possessive individualism”³¹. Such a lack of “critical” Utopian vision dooms potentially counter-hegemonic international organisations to a “problem-solving” role given their concern with the short term, assuming that it is possible to fully escape the immediacy and reality of the problems of the present.

Thirdly, the “iron law of oligarchy” dictates against those elites representing Southern interests being fully democratic in their decisions, resisting the generally more extreme demands for change from the rank and file. The personal material interests of the elites representing the South in multilateral forums (including organic intellectuals of the counter-hegemonic variety), might impede reform, as these elites are expected to negotiate themselves “out of” (material) power, a highly improbable prospect (Nel, 1999:14). This is not inconceivable, as it happened on a smaller scale (and only in terms of political power) during South Africa’s recent democratisation. It is however instructive to note that South Africa’s transition is widely regarded as a “miracle”!

2.2.3. Hegemony and the position of the United States in the world order

The dominance (“power over”) of one state over another is not enough to create hegemony. The ways of doing and thinking of the prevailing social groups in lesser states need to conform to the ways of doing and thinking of the dominant social groups in the dominant (hegemonic) state(s) (Gill, 1993:42). A neo-Gramscian interpretation of the concept of hegemony expands the more orthodox foundations and measurements of hegemony, namely one state’s military and economic preponderance to include the normative underpinnings of global hegemony (dominant values, ideas and ideologies) (Gill, 1986:323). The centrality of production, and the social relations and structures spawned by the relations of production in neo-Marxist analyses, results in relatively more explanatory weight being given to the economic aspect of hegemony, than one would find in realist writings. A neo-Gramscian conception of hegemony involves a large consensual component, and revolves less around the ability to exert “power over”, as is the case with neo-realist understandings

³¹ To use Gill’s (1990:86) phrase.

of hegemony. As a rule of thumb, the greater the consent, and the less the need for coercion, the more hegemonic the order. Cox (1983:171) views

“hegemony at the international level...not merely [as] an order among states. It is an order within a world economy with a dominant mode of production which penetrates into all countries and links into other subordinate modes of production. It is also a complex of international social relationships which connect the social classes of the different countries. World hegemony is describable as a social structure, an economic structure, and a political structure; and it cannot simply be one of these things but must be all three. World hegemony, furthermore, is expressed in universal norms, institutions and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behaviour for states and for those forces of civil society that act across national boundaries – rules which support the dominant mode of production”.

In his often-cited 1983 article, Cox states that a hegemonic order founded and maintained by the US has been in decline ever since the mid-1960s. In a transfigured world order one of the possible outcomes he foresees is “a reconstruction of hegemony with a broadening of political management as envisaged by the Trilateral Commission” (Cox, 1983:171). In a 1992 article, assuming that US hegemony has indeed declined, the outcome he foresees as most likely is “a revival of declining hegemony underpinned not by one state but by an oligarchy of powerful states that have to concert their powers” (Cox, 1996:518). Gill (1990) is more insistent that this is indeed the way in which hegemony has been reconstituted. But, it has become less the political leaders of this “oligarchy of powerful states”, and more the economic elites based in these states, that affect our daily lives (Robinson, 1996a:18-20)

This reconfiguration of hegemony is encapsulated by a shift from an *international economic order* (characterised by economically sovereign states and *national* political economies) to a *transnational liberal economic order* in which (global) economic concerns increasingly dominate public agendas to the detriment of (national) socio-political concerns which have become increasingly marginalised (Gill, 1990:88, 97; 1991:62-65). “National” capital has also been put on the defensive vis-à-vis the growing importance and influence of transnational capital. The features of the transnational liberal economic order include the diminished accountability/control of leaders over the material well-being of its state’s citizens; the internationalisation of the state and of production; the increasing structural power and mobility of capital; the efficient and global reach of the media, telecommunications and transportation; and the dominance of neo-liberal views and policies (Cox, 1981:144-149; 1994; Gill, 1990:88-100; Gill and Law, 1989; Robinson, 1996a). These developments have been accompanied and facilitated by the growth of a transnational managerial class. This

transnational elite has been the implementers and apologists of the relocated hegemonic order. Although hegemony's roots are strongest in the US, this transnational class has attained a "clearly distinctive class consciousness" (Cox, 1987:359).

The leaders of this transnational liberal economic order is a *transnational managerial class*³² gaining prominence at the expense of more nationally focused elites (Cox, 1981:147; 1987:360-362). The transnational managerial class is the leaders of a broader group benefiting from the current hegemonic order. The original centre of this broader social group is the American upper and middle classes (the political economic aspect of their lives was depicted in J.K. Galbraith's incisively titled book *The Culture of Contentment*), but has expanded to include much of the societies of other Trilateral states, as well as the smaller upper strata in the Third World which have similar material qualities of life. The values, tastes and culture of the US middle and upper classes have spread to other parts of the world, thanks to American influence in foreign markets, but also in broader emulation of the hegemon's successful ways (Gill, 1990:47, 86; 1991:63).

The relocation of the hegemonic vanguard, from a national base in the US (during say the 1950s and 1960s), to a class that stretches across state boundaries³³ offers a fresh perspective on the debate about declining US hegemony. Hegemony, although corresponding more closely to US interests than to that of any other state, is *not* synonymous with US interests (as it pretty much used to be). The aforementioned shift from a nationally based hegemony to a less state-based hegemony explains the context of Cafruny's (1990) analysis of declining US hegemony from a neo-Gramscian perspective. Bear in mind a previous postulate that, for neo-Gramscian

³² I prefer Cox's notion of transnational *managerial* class to the somewhat overly economic tone of Gill's (1990) transnational *capitalist* class. Cox's term appears more inclusive of the politicians, intellectuals and high-level bureaucrats that are also essential to the current hegemonic order. Apart from those in managerial positions in multinational corporations and their families, the transnational managerial class also includes "public officials in the national and international agencies involved with economic management and a whole range of experts and specialists who in some way are connected with the maintenance of the world economy in which multinationals thrive" (Cox, 1987:359).

³³ Albeit that the national identification of the various members of the transnational managerial class has weakened in some respects (mostly economically), the world has not suddenly become boundary-less for them. As such, states still play an important role, even for transnational managerial elites (Murphy, 1998:423).

authors, the less consensual the order, the less hegemonic it is. Cafruny focuses on *American* hegemony (1990:103-114) and divides US post-WW II hegemony into three successive phases: integral hegemony (1944-60), declining hegemony (1960-71) and minimal hegemony (1971-present). The phase of integral hegemony, corresponds with Gill's international economic order; the phase of declining hegemony corresponds with the start of the transnationalisation of the world economy, and the phase of minimal hegemony agrees with Gill's *transnational liberal economic order*.

During the *integral hegemonic* phase, hegemony is strongest and at its most consolidated and stable. Integral hegemony is characterised by "a well-developed sense of common purpose and lack of overt antagonism among various groups. In this type of regime the ruling group is capable of simultaneously satisfying its own economic aspirations and those of the system as a whole" (Cafruny, 1990:105). Integral hegemony "can persist only in those historical periods when well organised, widespread opposition is absent or discredited and when the ruling class performs a progressive function in the productive process" (Femia, 1981:46).

Minimal hegemony, as currently exerted by the US, is primarily due to the transnational managerial class no longer as strongly identifying with, being as restricted by, and being held as accountable by states, as during the time of Gill's *international* economic order. This has often placed politicians and economic elites at odds (think for example of the arguments spawned by the relocation of American-owned production plants to Mexico and Southeast Asia). Political and economic leaders no longer have the same objectives, as they tended to have during the international economic order/integral hegemony phase. Even though these economic leaders are obviously not omnipotent in their ability to politically "control" and shape the world order, their hand is strengthened vis-à-vis nationally based (and focused) politicians by the "behavioural and structural power of capital" (Gill and Law, 1989:182-4), with transnational capital resisting any attempts at "state or interstate control or intervention" (Cox, 1994:99). The power of capital reinforces, and is reinforced by, the orthodoxy attained by hyper-liberal ideas (particularly its

antagonistic stand towards government in general³⁴) and influential non-populist and undemocratic international forums (such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO, Trilateral Commission, World Economic Forum, etc.). One should not exaggerate the tension between American political elites, as linkages, overlap and sympathies do exist between these groups³⁵. Overlapping interests and “membership” between political and transnational economic elites make it very difficult to discern when one should view American political elite behaviour as on behalf of US interests, and when it is (transnational) class motivated. Subscription to liberal economic ideology is, however, one way of distinguishing between transnational and nationally focused elites (Gill and Law, 1988:67).

Minimal hegemony is characterised by the inability/unwillingness of American rulers to “devise policies capable of serving common interests, but the subordinate groups [being] too weak to consolidate a counter-hegemonic bloc” (Augelli and Murphy, 1988:125), their leaders co-opted through a process of *trasformismo*³⁶ (Femia, 1981:47). In such conditions, dominant classes no longer “accord their interests and aspirations with the interests and aspirations of other classes” (Femia, 1981:47), acting unilaterally on behalf of specific interests (Cox, 1996:245). Such a weakened “hegemony loses its ethical nature and becomes a fraud at the expense of the subaltern classes, a deceit by which they are victimised” (Augelli and Murphy, 1988:125). Although only minimally hegemonic, the US remains the most powerful state in the world, and as such is (still) able to force other states to incur certain costs or shoulder a burden to the benefit of the US. The point of declining US hegemony is that self-interested American behaviour can no longer masquerade behind grand and quite

³⁴ The state, although generally maligned by neo-liberals, remains integral to the hegemonic project, as noted in the increased importance of those arms of the state most connected to the global economy, such as treasuries, central banks and finance ministries. All the while, state agencies with a more national focus have declined in importance (Baker, 1999:81; Cox, 1994:49; 1996:516).

³⁵ Gill’s (1990) study of the Trilateral Commission, a forum global elite consensus forming and co-operation, is instructive for those groups excluded, as he himself indicates. Gill’s study helps us to gain a better understanding of the political subgroups that have more sympathy with the hegemonic project than others. The assumption is that those American subgroups that are excluded from the Trilateral Commission, are more Americanist in their motives for action (though this is obviously not a very accurate assumption to make). Members of the Trilateral Commission are typical of the transnational managerial class. Members are internationalist in vision, and as such the Commission excludes small-scale and “national” capital, as well as communists, left-wing socialists, ultra-nationalists, populists and radical right-wingers (Gill, 1990:156, 158).

³⁶ *Trasformismo* is the assimilation and co-optation of leaders from threatening subordinate groups, whereby the organising of class-based opposition is undermined (Cox, 1983:166).

universally accepted moral principles as was once the case, nor does it benefit the system as widely as it did during the phase of integral hegemony. A slight inversion of Nossal's (1999) argument serves the neo-Gramscian argument quite nicely. Nossal argues that the US has not experienced a decline of its power. Nossal (1999:7-10) mentions numerous examples of American unilateralism and explicit assertions of power. The "loose talk, rudeness and arrogance...carry few costs for the United States (Nossal, 1999:15). However, unlike with realist notions of hegemony, American "domination" indicates a decline of hegemony, not the assertion thereof (Neunfeld, 1995:15).

Germain and Kenny (1998:17) are correct in saying that the measurement of hegemony is problematic, especially at the level of world order. How does one measure and compare the absence/presence of opposition, or the extent of the legitimacy enjoyed by a hegemonic order? The answer to this difficult question, I would venture, is that the immense and increasing poverty and inequality characteristic of the world at present (Robinson, 1996a:21-23) are the major indicators of the illegitimacy (compared to thirty years ago, for example) of the current order. This view is admittedly an explicitly normative one, implying a preference for a world where everyone's basic needs are satisfied, even if it happens to result in lower absolute gains in overall welfare, which seem to be the liberal economist's yardstick³⁷.

Hegemony should not be understood as an absolute, an either or state of being, since total omnipotence is impossible (Strange, 1987:557). Instead, hegemony should rather be visualised along a continuum where the amount of fraud and coercion used is inversely proportional to hegemonic pervasiveness. This understanding of deep-rooted and inconspicuous power does not preclude the use of relational power by, or conflict and competition between, the hegemon and other states, even its allies (Cafruny, 1990:104), but stresses that the challenge and the outcome is very much constrained by the "limits of the possible" (Gill, 1991:55). However, such conflict and competition hardly threaten the survival of the world system or allow for the rise of a

³⁷ For a philosophical support of my normative stance, see the highly authoritative work by John Rawls (1973), *A Theory of Justice*.

counter-hegemonic bloc. This fluid view of hegemony can be detected in the writings of major neo-Gramscian theorists. Cox (1996:517) insists that the “structure of values and understandings about the nature of order that permeates ... world society ... [i]n a hegemonic society are *relatively* unquestioned” (my emphasis). Augelli and Murphy (1988:122) state that non-dominant social groups “acknowledge the hegemonic group as having a leading role in society and a *relatively* wide political consensus supports the hegemon’s policy goals” (my emphasis). Hegemony is not a definite, unopposable, infinite, boundless and conclusive reality, even though the domination aspect of hegemonic power/knowledge often makes it seem as such. Cracks in the seeming omniscience of hegemony can be found in the antithesis of hegemony, namely the counter-hegemonic potentialities of certain oppositional social movements, institutions and ideas.

Hollis and Smith (1990:7, 197-202) raise the following problem: If state behaviour has any influence on the system in which it exists, one must explain state behaviour. Similarly, if bureaucratic behaviour has any influence on state behaviour, we must account for bureaucratic behaviour. In the case of the US, due to its hegemonic position, it affects the international system more than does any other state and the system has less influence on it than it has on other states. The influence of the American state and the relative freedom it enjoys from systemic constraints accord American bureaucracies more influence, due to the influence of the state in which they are situated. Let us now turn to the neo-Gramscian treatment of the agent-structure problem in International Relations.

2.2.4. The neo-Gramscian treatment of the agent-structure problem

Two important implications arise from Marx’s succinct remark that “people make history, but not in conditions of their own choosing”. Firstly, the power of agents must be recognised as being behind behaviour, but secondly, structural limitations on agents should not be disregarded (Cox, 1996:50; Dessler, 1989:443). The agent-structure problem is at least implicitly resolved in most theories in social science, by pitting agents and structures in certain relations against each other (Wendt, 1987:337). I will not attempt to defend the neo-Gramscian approach to the agent-structure

problem³⁸, as it would simply require an exegesis beyond the scope of this study. Instead I will only state my understanding of the neo-Gramscian position.

Cox and others view structure as influential in delimiting the behavioural scope of actors in a structure. Instead of lapsing into appropriating structure exclusive, primordial, independent and mechanistic influence, neo-Gramscians non-deterministically and dynamically view structure as largely the result of historically specific “collective human activity”³⁹ (Gill, 1991:55, 60; see also Germain and Kenny, 1998:5), although claiming that they view structure as an *intentional* creation is inaccurate. For neo-Gramscian theorists, structures are intimately connected to the politics of the transnational elites, and do not enjoy much autonomy to become locales of conflict and contestation (Drainville, 1994:114). When not influencing or changing structural conditions, social, economic and political behaviour further takes place within the mutable and vague boundaries of a certain social structure (Gill, 1991:55)⁴⁰. It is important to note that the behaviour of agents in a structure is differentially constrained, making some states more equal than others, the practice of the powerful being particularly meaningful (Drainville, 1994:108; Gill, 1991:62). However, despite the fact that structure constrains, it also enables. No intentional social activity is possible without the existence of some prior form of social structure (Dessler, 1989:452). It should be borne in mind that not all units are equally enabled by social structures. For example, the eloquent and the illiterate are not equally empowered by language, nor are those who do not speak the “official” language.

The problem with an approach where agency and structure are both dependent and independent variables is that it becomes nigh impossible to be certain of how strongly

³⁸ For what has become the definitive introduction to the agent-structure problem in the field of International Relations, see Wendt (1987).

³⁹ It is useful to contrast the neo-Gramscian position with that of realism, such as Kenneth Waltz’s (1979, 1986). Waltz understands structure as existing separately from the agents in that structure, despite structure being the by-product of original unit behaviour (Dessler, 1989:448-451). Except at creation, agency plays no rule in shaping the structure, as the essential organising principle of the international (state) structure is anarchy, anarchy being a permanent condition. States (agency) have different attributes and strengths, and can even counter structural constraints (Waltz, 1986:344), but the anarchic nature of the structure renders states to behave similarly. See also Ashley (1986:255-256) for a brief attack on the inadequacies of “scientific” structural Marxism, as associated with Althusser.

⁴⁰ A social structure is constituted by “the intersubjective aspect of ideas, ideologies and theories, social institutions and a prevailing socio-economic system and a set of power relations” (Gill, 1991:55). See Germain and Kenny (1998:10) for problems with such an understanding.

a unit is constrained by structure or to what extent it is agency driven. The nearest solution to this problem is to view units in relation to one another, by creating an implicit hierarchy as it were. For example, one could argue that in the international system, the hegemon is least constrained and also the most able to successfully satisfy its national interests. In terms of structural constraints, the hegemon is least constrained, other major powers (e.g. UK, France, Japan) being significantly more constrained, but not as much as middle powers. The most vulnerable to, and dependent on structural forces are Third World states, with a further hierarchy within this broad group. The extension of the claim that not all states are equally restricted by structure is that some states are more able to shape the structural conditions in which all agents exist, often leading to a reciprocal reinforcement of the one by the other. In sum, behaviour is the result of structure and agency, but for some units structure is less of a determining factor than for other.

It is in this respect that Hollis and Smith's (1990:7; 197-202) approach to the level of analysis problem should be viewed. If the units of a system had no influence on the system⁴¹, then one need not take unit behaviour into account when trying to understand the system. But, if we accept the not so contentious claim that the world system (structure) is influenced by state (unit) behaviour, then we need to examine unit/state behaviour as well. Similarly, it can be argued that we must account for bureaucratic influence on state behaviour (Hollis and Smith, 1990:7-8). Accordingly, a system-state dyad, or a state-bureaucracy⁴² dyad becomes the unit and level of analysis (Buzan, 1995:204). In the case of the US, given that it is the most powerful state in the world, it subsequently affects the system more than does any other state and the system has less influence on it than on other states. The influence of the American state and the relative freedom it enjoys from systemic constraints therefore accord American bureaucracies more influence, due to the influence of the state in which they are located. The relatively great freedom and power enjoyed by the US, also makes it more able to actively pursue its interests, as its objectives are less likely to be thwarted by systemic influences, as would be the case with lesser powers

⁴¹ Waltz (1979:79) understands system as "composed of a structure and of interacting units".

⁴² I prefer the use of *sectoral* instead of *bureaucratic* to describe the various food aid programmes and their connections with "US food aid".

Hollis and Smith's (1990:7-9) approach prevents us from reifying the state into a unitary, rational and coherent entity. Understanding state behaviour in dyadic terms (i.e. state-sector, allows us to account for the contradictions one often finds between, for example, US food aid and US agricultural policy, or between US agricultural policy and US aid policy. A dyadic view of US food aid also allows us to better understand the inconsistencies of the ontological creation, "US food aid". By breaking "US food aid" into, for example, state-Title I or state-Food for Progress dyads, the contradictory effects of lumping together what does not necessarily belong together are moderated⁴³.

⁴³ United States food aid is the theme of chapter 5.

Chapter 3 - Food aid, surplus and agriculture: Some conceptual and methodological issues

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with two themes. The first theme pertains to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of food aid. The second involves demonstrating that international food aid is still largely a form of agricultural surplus disposal, but it also indicates where and how to identify food aid less driven by surplus disposal concerns.

Food aid seems easy to classify as the donation of food to one state by another. In this study, food aid refers only to *international* food aid. Such an understanding excludes governments or other local agencies that run their own internal food aid programmes (Singer, Wood and Jennings, 1987:14). Problems arise when we define aid in terms of the purpose it fulfils in the recipient country, that is, is it aid or dumped surplus? We have virtually no way of telling. That is why this study focuses on the purpose aid fulfils for the donor¹. But, for donors, food aid is often a guise for subsidised exports, so how does one determine the balance of aid/trade in food aid? The valuation of food aid is complicated by the difficulty of exactly determining international agricultural market prices, and thereby the various values/costs of food aid to the different donors. These problems will all be discussed in this chapter.

It is by no means an accepted fact that food aid is a form of surplus disposal, as agricultural surplus plays virtually no role in the food aid donations of many smaller donors (Uvin, 1992:304). Food aid is often alluded to as being related to agricultural surplus in donor countries, but little substantiation and elaboration of this claim can be found in the literature. The connection between food aid and surplus disposal is either assumed, or simply not demonstrated in studies which have this view of food aid².

¹ This is consistent, firstly, with the view propounded here that food aid is largely a donor driven process, as well as, secondly, with the concomitant investigation into the overall decline of food aid whereby recipient needs are not understood to be of such great importance vis-à-vis those of domestic stakeholders in major donor countries.

² Examples of such references to food aid as surplus disposal can be found in Bezuneh and Deaton (1997:672); Clay and Stokke (1991:9,27); FAO (1995c:3); Hathaway and Ingco (1995:22-3); Islam (1996:6); Raffer (1997:1902); Taylor (1992:143); Valdés and McCalla (1996:421) and UNCTAD

Before the link between food aid and agricultural surplus is shown, the relationship between international agricultural prices, stock levels and agricultural surplus will be examined. This will be done so as to enable us to make inferences about food aid levels based on the level of agricultural prices, stock levels and agricultural surplus. Once the relationship between the three factors mentioned have been considered, their relationship with international food aid levels will be investigated. It will be demonstrated that food aid levels oscillate in reaction to changes in the international prices of the main cereals (wheat, maize and rice), stock levels and surplus. However, the relationship is not perfectly proportional.

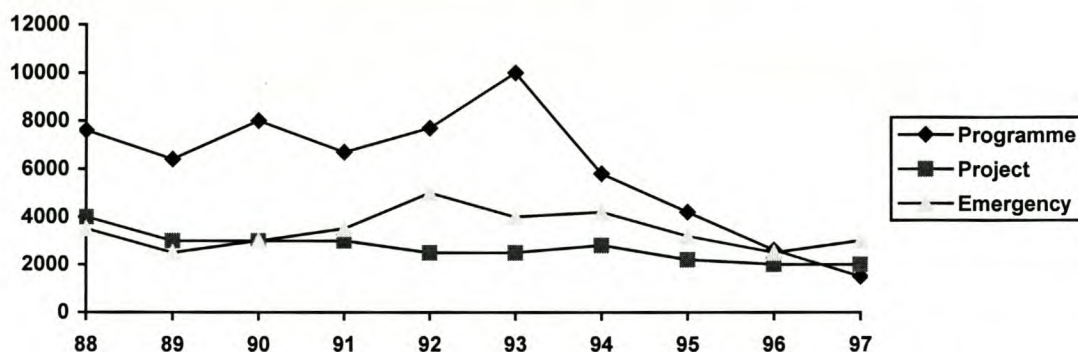
Before proceeding, it will be useful to distinguish between the three main types of food aid (programme, project and emergency), as some types are more driven by agricultural surplus disposal than others. *Programme* food aid is a form of government-to-government food aid. It is provided to recipients as a grant or on easy credit terms. Programme food aid is a form of balance of payments support, as it enables foreign exchange-strapped countries to save the money it would in any case have spent on commercial food imports (Shaw and Clay, 1993:2). Recipient governments typically distribute programme food aid through normal market channels. When the amount of programme food aid received equals the food imports that would have taken occurred in any case, it has no direct production disincentive effects. This does not deny that the ease with which programme food aid is often given undermines government incentives to promote domestic agricultural production. Taylor (1992:143) casts a lot of suspicion on programme food aid as this form of food aid is often seen as a surplus outlet and a way of circumventing export subsidy restrictions. Programme food aid also demonstrates the greatest counter-cyclicality with cereal prices of all the types of food aid.

It is often stated that food aid has become more “developmental” and thus not just an instrument of surplus disposal (Charlton, 1997:440-444; Islam, 1996:7 and Uvin, 1992). *Project* food aid does not go directly to governments, as does programme food aid. Instead, project food aid directly targets the poor and malnourished, typically for

(1996:63). Saran and Konandreas (1991) offers the most extensive explication of the relationship between food aid and surplus disposal to the author’s knowledge.

specific development projects. Unlike programme food aid, project food aid raises the nutritional level in a country, being additional to normal commercial imports. Project food aid is distributed through non-market channels, so as to minimise its effect on the functioning of food markets. *Emergency* food aid is given in reaction to man-made or natural disasters. Project and emergency food aid levels have remained fairly constant in the last decade and constitute “developmental” food aid, that is, food aid less driven by agricultural surplus disposal motives. There appears to be some substitution between project and emergency food aid, but the combined level of the two types of food aid has stayed fairly constant (see figure 3.1). The relative stability of the aggregate of project and emergency food aid can largely be accounted for by the contributions of middle powers, but also from the contributions made by the US under Titles II and III of the Public Law 480 (PL480) programme. Though agricultural price levels influence project and emergency food aid levels, surplus disposal is less of a consideration with these two types of food aid, than it is with programme food aid.

Figure 3.1. Food aid deliveries by category, 1988-97 (in 1 000 tonnes)



Source: (WFP, 1999b)

3.2. Conceptualising food aid

Internationally, food aid is generally understood to be a transfer of food to a state from outside its borders as a grant, or with a concessional element of at least 25%. This yardstick is somewhat arbitrary and obscures some of the problems in

determining exact levels of food aid. Furthermore, conceptual problems relating to food aid, whether in terms of the actual classification of food aid as *food* aid, or the problems of valuating food aid, also require consideration³. By first looking at some conceptual problems with food aid, some of the measurement problems (which are discussed in the latter part of this section) will become more obvious.

This study uses the food aid statistics provided by the WFP, FAO, IGC, USAID, USDA and other official agencies in this study. These agencies indicate food aid donations by tonnage (and generally not in terms of value). The reason for their choice of measurement will become apparent in the following discussion when the difficulty of measuring food aid in any other way will be demonstrated. The food aid statistics provided by the aforementioned agencies often portray food aid as a clear-cut category of foreign aid.

Much food aid provides budgetary relief to recipient countries, incurring savings in foreign exchange in the current account of the recipient, as poor states no longer have to pay (as much) for food they probably would have imported in any case, since these states now receive food on concessional or grant terms. Such food aid therefore fulfils the same role as financial aid, namely acting as balance of payments support in the recipient state. But, such food aid is reckoned as food aid, and not as financial aid. Conversely, much financial aid is in effect food aid. A financial transfer to a recipient country frees up foreign exchange to be spent on additional imports, some portion of which may be on the importing of food. Furthermore, how should one count monetary contributions made by donors under the Food Aid Convention (FAC)? Is it financial aid, or is it food aid? The same question can be asked of triangular food aid⁴.

The FAC of 1967 set a binding minimum commitment of 4,5m tonnes, less than half the quantity the United States originally wanted. The FAC 1967 spread the burden from three to seventeen industrialised states, excluding Argentina (IGC, 1998a). Only in 1980 was the FAC minimum increased to 7,6m tonnes. The first downward

³ This section is based largely on similar arguments expressed in Singer (1987), Raffer and Singer (1996:73-79) and Shaw and Singer (1996:452-456).

⁴ Triangular food aid involves, for example, Sweden purchasing maize from Kenya to be used as food aid in nearby Ethiopia. Below, triangular food aid is discussed at somewhat greater length.

adjustment in the FAC minimum occurred in 1995 when the minimum commitment was reduced to 5,4m tonnes (USAID, 1998). If one uses the FAC minimum as a yardstick for measuring the overall obedience of regime members in contributing their pound of flesh, one is struck by the ostensible altruism of regime members, since their contributions have always exceeded the predetermined minimum levels. Are we correct in our assumption of altruism? The answer seems to be negative, and can be usefully demonstrated by contrasting the minimum contribution of food aid with the international willingness to provide financial aid. International financial aid targets, such as the 0,7% of GDP target, have never simultaneously met by all OECD donors, with total financial aid hovering around the 0,35% of GDP level (Raffer and Singer, 1996:85), having fallen to 0,22% of GDP in 1997 (OECD, 2000). The large donors of financial aid, the US and Japan, are particularly far from reaching the 0,7% of GDP milestone. By contrast, many smaller (European) states regularly exceed the 0,7% level, noticeably Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands.

Why have aggregate international targets for financial aid never been met? Domestic political opposition to financial aid seems to provide the answer, potentially, but this opposition is rather a manifestation of two rudimentary differences between financial aid and food aid. The one difference pertains to donor benefit, and the other to the actual cost of the two forms of aid. The national benefit to a donor giving financial aid is vague, dispersed, not guaranteed in terms of foreign policy objectives, and domestic support for it is not as intense as for food aid, even though foreign policy goals are equally difficult to reach through food aid. By contrast, the strength, access and focus of certain farm and other lobbies in support of food aid suggest a more immediate and expressible benefit to the donating state. (Bezuneh and Deaton, 1993:464; Clay and Stokke, 1991:6; Holdar, 1993:464; Saran and Konandreas, 1991:38; Singer, 1987:324,328). The cost financial aid incurs in the budget of the donor is direct and measurable. Furthermore, whereas \$1m in financial aid is a straight deduction of \$1m from the national budget, the actual cost of food aid is exaggerated in the national books. As food aid is predominantly surplus produce, the "\$1m worth of food aid" could never have been sold for \$1m in a competitive market, as the lack of demand dictates either a lower price or unsold stock.

In general terms, the fact that the FAC minimum has always been exceeded, and the safe assumption that altruism is not a prevailing norm in the global political economy, suggest that there must be some benefit to the major donors, most of which are net exporters of food. The benefit to the major donors lies in the surplus disposing nature of food aid. To use the financial aid contrast once more, money can never be in surplus, but food can, which explains food aid's surpassing of international targets.

The problem mentioned before remains: how does one distinguish between financial aid and food aid. The solution proposed here is to consider the way the particular form of aid is calculated by the donor, because in the valuation of aid, \$1m worth of food aid often costs the donor less than \$1m of financial aid (especially for major agricultural producers). States have various self-interested reasons for donating \$1m worth of food aid rather than \$1m worth of financial aid, without the effect on the recipient even entering into the equation. Calculating food aid in such a way is in line with the focus on the donating aspect of food aid (food aid as supply driven) propounded in this study.

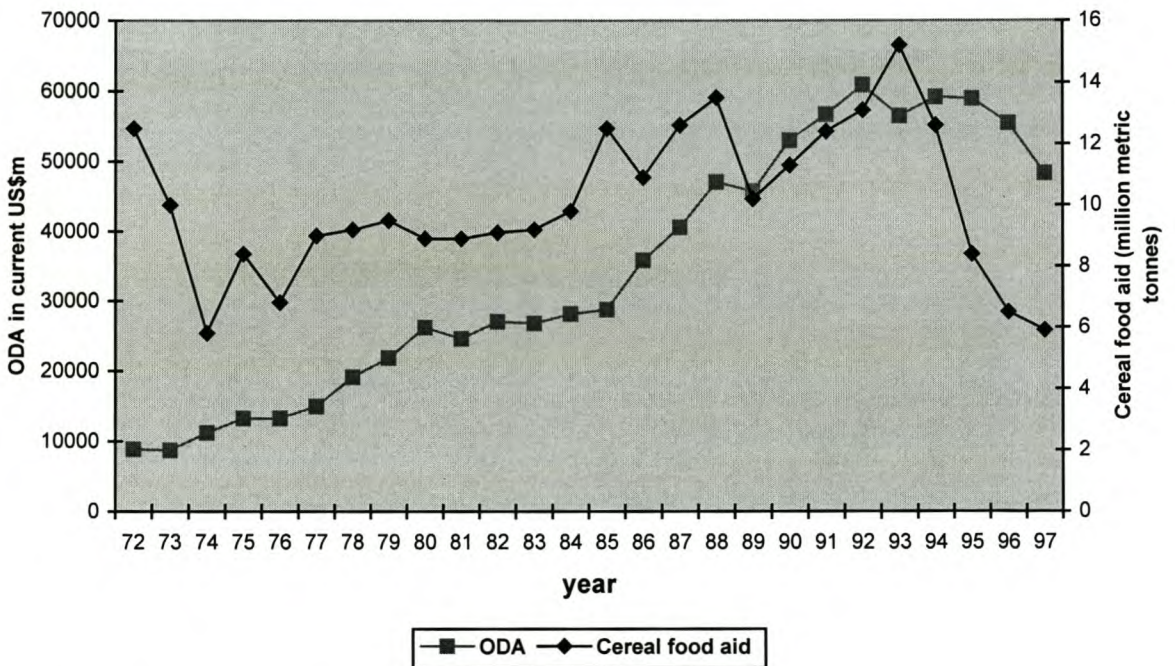
While moves are afoot in many donor states to bring food aid into more direct contrast with financial aid (i.e. increase the substitution between the two forms of aid), for example the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act in the US, an element of additionality remains. Where food aid comes out of the same budget as does financial aid, little or no additionality exists, as in the United Kingdom⁵. Still, the two forms of aid often come out of different budgets. US Title I food aid offers a shining example, as it comes out of the budget of the USDA, whereas USAID carries the cost of financial aid as well as Titles II and III of the Public Law 480 food aid programme⁶. In terms of aggregate world food aid, it has been found that during years in which food aid increased, a corresponding decrease in financial aid did not occur, which confirms the surplus disposal status of food aid, as well as the additionality of it to financial aid (Saran and Konandreas, 1991:42).

⁵ Even when substitution between food aid and financial aid occurs, food aid does provide the national benefit of stimulating national agriculture in the donor state by increasing demand in the cases where food commodities are acquired within the borders of the donating state.

⁶ In 1998, food aid accounted for 16% of total US foreign aid (USAID, 1999e). This figure will be much lower for states for which agricultural surplus disposal motives do not figure in their donation of food aid.

Food aid has been in decline vis-à-vis foreign aid as a whole (ODA) (see figure 3.2), but this is largely due to the increase in aggregate foreign aid over the last few decades, rather than a decline of food aid per se. However, the increasing substitution between food aid and financial aid mentioned above, and the gradual disconnection of food aid from surplus availability (the “developmentalisation of food aid) have contributed to the widening gap between food aid and foreign aid in general. After decades of steady growth, foreign aid has been decline ever since the peak it reached in 1992, albeit that this decline has not been as extreme has the decline of food aid after 1993 had been.

Figure 3.2. Net ODA flows and cereal food aid, 1972-97



Sources: OECD (2000b) and USAID (1998).

The next conceptual and operational problem concerns the quantification of the concessional element in food aid, in other words, finding out what part of food aid is

actually “aid” and what part is “trade”⁷. Part of the problem lies in determining the exact international prices of agricultural products.

Despite international agricultural prices indicating “trends” in international supply and demand, the effective prices for wheat, coarse grains and rice have been estimated to be 30-40% lower than the official Chicago price (Raffer and Singer, 1996:74). This is due to discounts given to food importers through a maze of bilateral agreements which include elements of export enhancement programmes, export credits, linkages with other trade concessions or financial aid, and so forth. Domestic support programmes to farmers in industrialised states are surplus generating, further depressing world prices. The importance of all this is that food aid is calculated according to the depressed world prices. In an international agricultural trading system free from the distortions mentioned above, prices would be higher, in effect allowing much more of food trade to be classified as food aid, if the 25% concessional standard is maintained and food aid is calculated according to the market-determined higher prices, not the “depressed” prices which one currently finds.

A further conceptual problem pertaining to food aid is determining the value of food aid. The value of food aid is determined either at cost to the donor and/or according to market prices or worth to donors. (The latter calculation - worth - cannot be found in official valuations, but it seems to be the rationale behind some food aid.) Calculating the value of food aid according to international market prices overestimates the value of food aid, because *de facto* market prices are lower than the official prices, as has been explained. On the other hand, food aid valued according to the cost to donors is usually undervalued as it does not consider the costs of subsidies, supports and guaranteed domestic prices, all of which inflate the cost to donors. Costs recovered through concessional sales also lower donor expenditure in both of the two aforementioned measures. Singer and Raffer (1996:77) see the true value of food aid as “somewhere between the international price and the budget cost price”. This understanding is somewhat unmindful of the surplus disposal aspect of much food

⁷ A half-hearted attempt at solving this problem is made in the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture. It is stipulated in Art 10(4) that “[m]embers donors of international food aid shall ensure that such aid shall be provided to the extent possible in fully grant form or on terms no less

aid. In wealthy countries, food, especially the basic products manufactured from cereals, have low elasticity of demand and price. With the production inducing agricultural policies found in many industrialised states, it is conceivable that the market price of certain agricultural products drop below the actual cost of production. Perverse stories about mountains of grain, lakes of wine and “subsidised” milk gratuitously fed back to the very same cows that produced it testify to the valuelessness of certain food stocks in some First World states. These useless stocks (to consumers in donor countries) often find its way to the Third World as food aid. Saran and Konandreas (1991:49) argue that the cheapest way of dealing with such surplus is through food aid, rather than hoarding stock or crop reduction programmes. Raffer and Singer’s (1996:77) lower level of food aid value could therefore be lower than the “cost to donors” (which in itself is an undervaluation), depending on the demand-price-surplus relationship. It is thus more accurate to describe the value of food aid as having an upper limit lower than the international price, and a lower limit set at the *worth* of food aid to donors (not the “cost”). The cost of food aid for major agricultural producers/exporters is closer to the lower limit than it is for states that are not major agricultural producers/exporters, such as Japan and the UK, which have to buy their food aid on the international market. This understanding of the costs of food aid remains open to fluctuations in agricultural markets, with costs increasing for everyone during tighter market situations, and vice versa.

The problematic nature of food aid statistics in terms of the type of aid it actually is, price and value should be clear. Recourse to denoting food aid levels in *tonnage* is not unproblematic, though. The problem whether it is food aid or financial aid in terms of the role it fulfils remains. Determining what qualifies as food aid and what does not according to price and concessional levels is a problem that also endures. The varying cost of food aid to donors has already been mentioned as influenced by the surplus disposal aspect of the food aid they donate. Food aid tonnage levels, considered in conjunction with international agricultural prices, indicate surplus levels in the international agricultural trading system. Comparing tonnage levels allow for greater comparison between donors as they calculate the costs of their food aid donations

concessional than those provided for in Article IV of the Food Aid Convention 1986”. The USA is the only donor that does not provide all its food aid in fully grant form.

differently. Such a form of comparison allows one to see the extent to which different states resist the counter-cyclical logic of food aid with agricultural prices in their respective pursuits of the professed altruism of their donations. It should always be borne in mind that states give food aid (rather than financial aid) for a variety of reasons which are often not motivated by charitable impulses.

What we have arrived at is that aid should be classified in terms of its first form, in other words, that which the *donor* classifies it as. Food aid will be measured in terms of tonnage, as this offers the simplest means of comparison between donors against the background of general price trends. No real solutions have been offered in this section, but hopefully it has aroused a greater sensitivity of the complexities of a seemingly straightforward commodity such as food aid. The following section will argue the point that, in general, food aid is intimately connected with agricultural surplus.

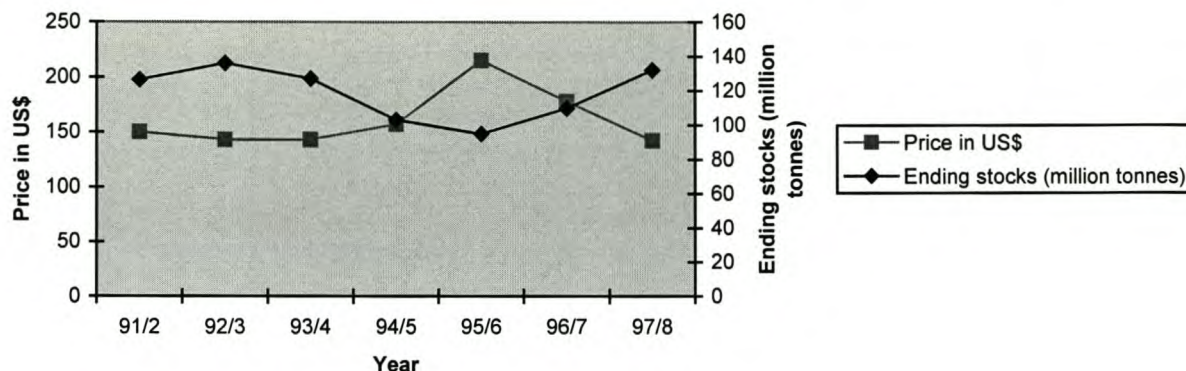
3.3. Food aid and agricultural surplus

3.3.1. Stock levels, surplus and price

What is the difference between agricultural stock and agricultural surplus? While these two concepts may refer to the same physical body, there is a conceptual difference⁸. Thus defined, food stocks denote food that has not been sold. Similarly, agricultural surplus is also agricultural produce that has not been sold. Are the two the same then? The answer lies in whether that food that is considered to be “stock/surplus” was ever intended for sale. The question is then, how does one distinguish between agricultural produce that has been deliberately accumulated/not sold (i.e. stock) and that which the food producing states have been unable to sell (i.e.

⁸ The FAO considers food stocks of 17-18% of total cereal consumption as the minimum required to safeguard world food security (FAO, 1998a).

Figure 3.3. The relationship between the wheat price and ending stocks in the 1990s



Source: IGC in *World Grain* (various issues)

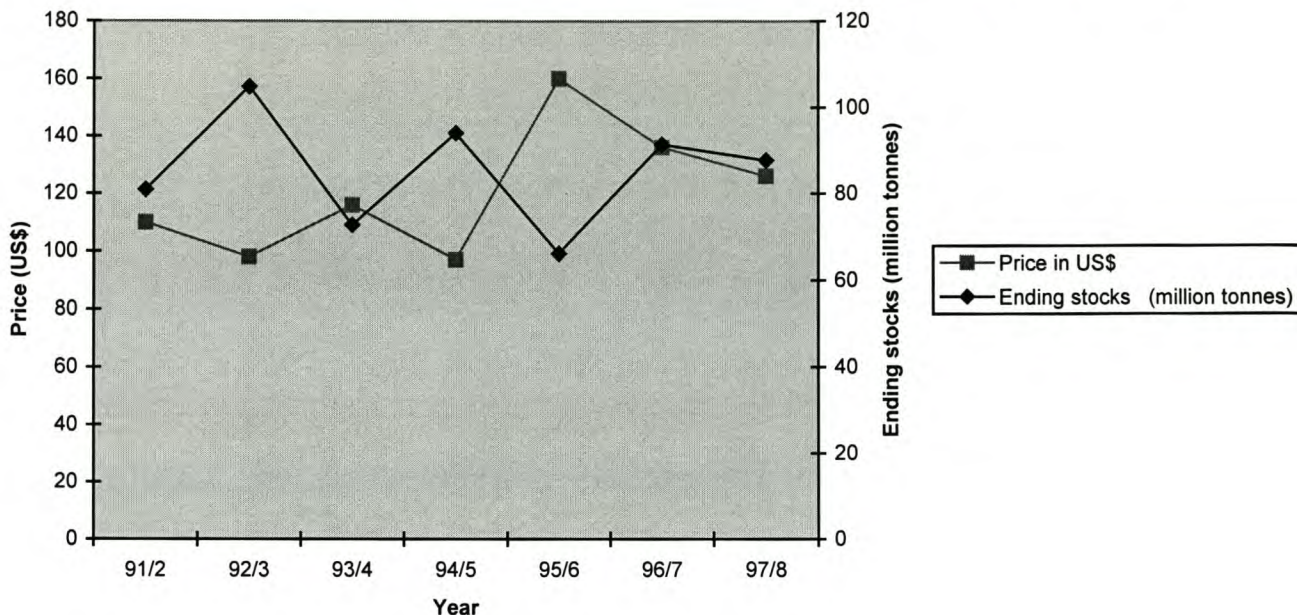
surplus)? My contention is that this distinction is nigh impossible to draw, especially on the international level of analysis.

A solution to this conundrum presents itself in the form of international agricultural prices. Price indicates the relationship between supply and demand⁹. Price thus enables us to create a fluid distinction between surplus and stock, indicating a trend, not a clear cut-off point. Thus, the lower the cereal price, the greater the surplus element in cereal stocks, *ceteris paribus*, and vice versa. Whilst I cannot offer a mathematical formula that captures the relationship between price on the one hand, and agricultural surplus/stock on the other, a general correlation is undeniable (see figures 3.2 and 3.3 plotting the relationship between wheat ending stocks and price, and between maize ending stocks and price). The fact that the troughs of price coincide with the peaks of stocks, and vice versa, for both commodities¹⁰, indicates the inverse relationship between the two variables, although this inverse relationship is not perfect.

⁹ The relationship is obviously not perfect, as demand for the produce of traditional food exporters is influenced by exogenous factors such as the economic well-being of importing countries, agricultural production in net food-importing countries, exchange rates, et cetera.

¹⁰ In 1997, 89% of food aid was in the form of cereals. Of that 89%, wheat, wheat flour and coarse grains (of which maize makes up the largest share) represented 81% (WFP, 1999a).

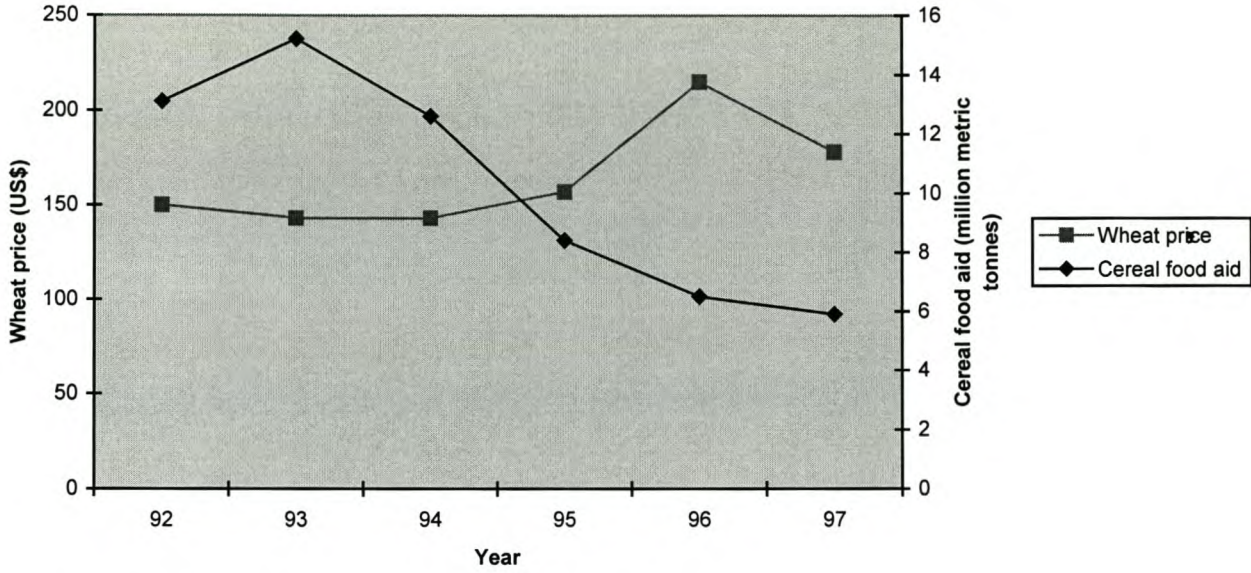
Figure 3.4. The relationship between the maize price and ending stocks in the 1990s



Source: IGC in *World Grain* (various issues)

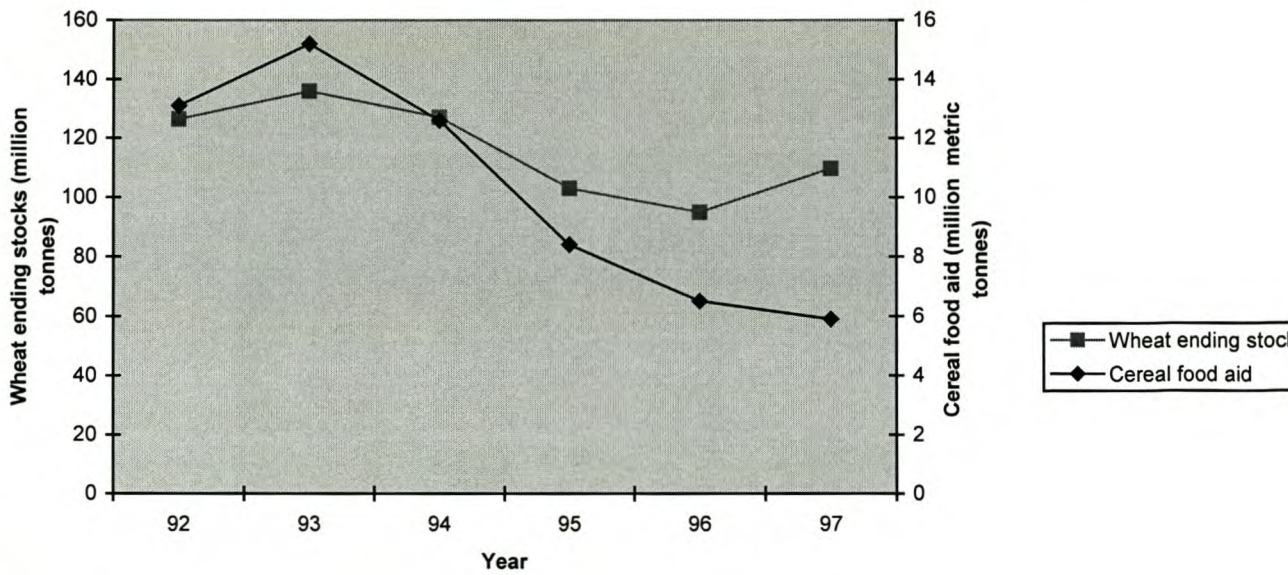
Figure 3.4. indicates the inverse relationship between the wheat price (the same trend is found for maize) and international food aid, and figure 3.5 demonstrates the direct relationship between food aid and wheat stock levels (the same trend is discernible for maize). Gilbert (1996:152) agrees on a correlation between food aid and wheat stocks, but does not see maize stocks as having any influence on food aid donating propensity. Gilbert (1996:146) does point to a study by Shapouri and Missiaen (1990) which found that in the US, EU and Canada, food aid flows were principally determined by commodity stocks and the wheat price (due to the large share of wheat in total food aid), while the budget deficit is a determinant of food aid levels in the US and Canada. Clay and Stokke (1991:27) concur that the food aid donations of some donors “are sensitive to prices and the level of national stocks available for export”.

Figure 3.5. Cereal food aid and the wheat price, 1992-97



Source: WFP (1999e), USAID (1998) and the IGC in *World Grain* (various issues)

Figure 3.6. Cereal food aid and wheat ending stocks, 1992-97



Sources: WFP (1999e), USAID (1998) and the IGC in *World Grain* (various issues)

Could the relationship between food aid and international agricultural prices not be explained by the fact that many aid budgets are set in nominal terms, so that a price rise would result in a donor being able to donate less in terms of tonnage, even though the amount spent remains the same? Although not all food aid programmes are capped in nominal terms, food aid budgets denoted in monetary value, not in tonnage, to my mind, do partly explain the aforementioned correlation. In order to argue around this problem, should one not rather ask questions regarding the reasons for capping food aid in nominal terms? If food aid were driven by genuine humanitarian concern, then it stands to reason that the greatest need for food aid is during times of high international agricultural prices, which indicate a more serious shortage in the food supply, which puts the most materially vulnerable section of international society (the poor in Third World countries) at even greater risk. In a truly altruistic world, such times would witness greater donations of food aid, rather than food aid increasing when prices are lower and food thus easier to acquire. It therefore seems as though the capping of food aid in monetary terms prevents food from being given away (donated) when the “effective” demand for it exists and such food can thus be sold. Since total world food aid first fell below the (non-binding) minimum target of 10m tonnes per year set at the 1974 World Food Conference in 1995, and has in fact always exceeded the legally binding minimum levels set by the various Food Aid Conventions, the implication is that food aid is a form of aid that is often given away quite painlessly, especially when contrasted with financial aid which has never reached the international targets set for it (Singer, Wood and Jennings, 1987:39).

If one accepts the link between agricultural stocks/prices and food aid levels, probing deeper to find the cause of agricultural price increases after 1993 will assist in understanding the acrimonious environment in which food aid found itself. The Agreement on Agriculture was signed in 1993, and the Uruguay Round of GATT a year later. Did the Uruguay Round lead to an increase in food prices upon its conclusion? There is much dissent surrounding the Uruguay Round and agriculture, even though there is relative agreement that the Uruguay Round has laid the foundation for greater liberalisation during future rounds of trade negotiations. Experts cannot agree, firstly, whether the *Uruguay Round* actually induced liberalisation in the agricultural sectors of major food producers (particularly the US

and the EU)¹¹; secondly, on how significant the liberalising reforms were; and thirdly, on the link between the Uruguay Round and agricultural price increases after 1993. What concerns us are the last two disagreements. On the one hand it is argued that the Uruguay Round induced very little agricultural liberalisation and thus would not have much of an impact on subsidies and supply, therefore not affecting prices greatly¹². The opposing view is that the Uruguay Round would/did result in higher international agricultural prices, especially for cereals, due to the greater significance attributed to the reforms induced by the Uruguay Round¹³. As we know, agricultural prices did rise in the period following the Uruguay Round, with cereal prices reaching its highest level since the food crises of the mid-1970s¹⁴. One cannot be certain if the reason for these drastic increases can be attributed to the supply limiting implications of the Uruguay Round¹⁵, or perhaps to increased demand due to “a recovery in world economic activities” (UNCTAD, 1996:13).

Be the above disagreement over the cause of agricultural price increases as it may, an increase in world agricultural prices was anticipated during the negotiation of the Uruguay Round. Subsequently, the Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least Developed and Net Food-Importing Countries was included in the Final Act to mitigate some of the problems the poor net food importers might experience during the years of liberalisation. To date the Decision has been toothless, and the World Trade Organisation has been reluctant to commit itself by calling for assistance to poor net-food importing

¹¹ There is relative consensus that untenably increasing budget costs prompted the inclusion of agriculture in the Uruguay Round. Paarlberg (1997:416) argues that the Uruguay Round did not impose any reforms on the US, and that American reforms were all voluntary. In fact, he argues, the Uruguay Round might even have prevented more significant reforms in US agriculture. The Uruguay Round did have some influence on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms, but reforms are more attributable to bilateral pressure from the US. For a similar argument also see UNCTAD (1996:70 note 11).

¹² Hathaway and Ingco (1995:8,23); Valdés and Zietz (1995:923) and UNCTAD (1996:70 note 11).

¹³ This view is found in FAO (1995c:13, 22); Goldin and Van der Mensbrugge (1995:36); Greenfield, de Nigris and Konandreas (1996:367); Hamilton and Whalley (1995:34); Raffer (1997:1903); UNCTAD (1996:62) and Yigletu (1997:112).

¹⁴ The drastic increases in agricultural prices were mainly found among temperate products, which are mostly exported by industrialised states. The prices of many tropical products did not increase, such as for bananas, despite demand for bananas having grown positively in recent times (FAO, 1995c:5; Raffer, 1997:1903), while the price of another tropical product, coffee, actually fell by 30% (1994-1996). Tropical products account for two-thirds of Third World agricultural exports (Greenfield, de Nigris and Konandreas, 1996:372; Hamilton and Whalley, 1995:42; Valdés and Zietz, 1995:923).

¹⁵ A FAO report (1995c:5) argued that the Uruguay Round would have a “negligible effect” on world agricultural production.

countries. Thus, while negative effects of the Uruguay Round have accrued automatically, benefits have not (Raffer, 1997:1903). The inability of GATT, or any other piece of international legislation to ensure a sustained high level of food aid points to the weakness of the food aid regime, the topic of investigation in chapter 4.

3.3.2. Food aid less driven by agricultural surplus disposal

It has been acknowledged that not all food aid is equally driven by disposal motives. It is such food aid that has gradually increased to ensure steady annual levels of food aid, albeit that these levels are relatively low. It is such food aid that constitutes the so-called “growth” of food aid identified in the title of this study. This section investigates the type of food aid more typically considered to be less driven by agricultural surplus, the channels through which such food aid flows, as well as the more likely sources of such food aid. Throughout, the connections between the types, channels and sources of more “developmental” food aid will be indicated. Keep in mind that surplus disposal still does play a role in the food aid dealt with in this section, albeit to a lesser extent.

Types: Figure 3.1 tells us that project and emergency food aid donations are fairly constant, their sum representing a fairly even aggregate, fluctuating between approximately 4,5m and 7,5m tonnes per year over the last decade. In contrast, programme food aid shows great variances¹⁶. The counter-cyclicality of programme food aid with agricultural prices (e.g. Title I) strongly suggests its surplus disposal motivation. Project and emergency food aid, on the other hand, are usually considered to be motivated by genuine humanitarian concern. Taylor (1992:143) confirms the general suspicion of programme food aid, as the type of food aid most likely to be used for the dumping of surplus/circumventing export subsidy restrictions, although it is not to deny that programme food aid often has positive effects. Our concern, however, is with project and emergency food aid.

¹⁶ Refer to the first two pages of this chapter for a somewhat broader discussion of the differences between the three main types of food aid.

According to figure 3.1, project food aid has been in steady decline, with emergency food aid ever increasing vis-à-vis project food aid. Charlton (1997:445; 451) notices a similar trend, namely an increasing shift towards emergency food aid, with a concomitant tendency to replace project food aid with emergency food aid. This is often due to shifts from developmental food aid to emergency food aid *within* predetermined, nominally capped aid budgets. The decline of the more development orientated project food aid is further attributed to factors such as the greater ease with which emergency funds can be obtained (vis-à-vis development aid); and the strict conditions some donors place on their giving of aid, often linking their aid to structural adjustment programmes, good governance and other objectives, thus disqualifying many states from receiving aid (Charlton, 1997:452,457).

“Triangular” food aid and so-called “local purchases” are types of food aid, inspired not by agricultural surplus, but rather by the lack thereof, and has increased in importance in recent years. It is a special type of food aid that fulfils the same function as project or emergency food aid (never as programme food aid). But, triangular food aid transactions have an added benefit in that it involves a donor purchasing food from a developing country for distribution as food aid in a nearby third country, thereby stimulating regional agricultural production in the South. Triangular food aid differs from normal food aid practice in the sense that food does not originate in developed food exporting countries or in international markets. Similarly, local purchases involve a donor using cash from its food aid budget to purchase food for use as food aid *within* that same country. These two types of food aid are typically used by net-food importing countries (that is, without surplus to dump) (Clay and Benson, 1991:144, 165-166). In table 3.1. below, triangular food aid transactions and local purchases (cereals) are indicated as a percentage of total cereals donated per donor (1992/93). The huge variation in the utilisation of triangular transactions/local purchases is striking. Major agricultural producers (e.g. USA, Canada, Australia and France) donate around 1% (if that) of their total food aid in the form of triangular food aid/local purchases¹⁷. Conversely, net-food importing

¹⁷ An exception to this group seems to be Denmark, which is not a *major* agricultural producer, even though it does export cereals on occasion. Danish food aid has shown huge variations, which could partly explain this seeming discrepancy.

countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Japan, Norway, Sweden, etc.) donate at least 45% of their food aid in this form (FAO, 1994:48).

Table 3.1. Donor use of triangular food aid and local purchases (as a percentage of total food aid donated by donor in 1992/93).

Donor	Triangular food aid and local purchases (%)
Australia	1.3%
Canada	0.85%
Denmark	0.03%
France	1.07%
Germany	46.3%
Japan	56.6%
The Netherlands	64.3%
Norway	60.8%
Sweden	75.1%
United Kingdom	51.7%
United States	0.16%

Source: Adapted from FAO (1994:48).

Channels: The multilateralisation of food aid has ensured some consistency in minimum annual food aid levels, constituting another dimension of what has been termed the *developmentalisation*¹⁸ of food aid (for want of a better term). However, states differ in the extent to which they support the multilateralisation of food aid, as revealed by the size of their contributions under the Food Aid Convention (FAC)¹⁹ and the proportion of food aid channeled multilaterally. Middle powers such as Australia, Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands donate more than half of their food aid multilaterally, as opposed to the US and the EU which are predominantly bilateral donors (Shaw and Clay, 1993:2). Support for the multilateralisation of food aid can be gauged, firstly, by the degree to which states behave as “middle powers”. The second indicator is a donor’s status as an agricultural producer, that is, whether it is a major agricultural exporter or not.

¹⁸ The multilateralisation of food aid involves two types of food aid, project and emergency food aid. Project food aid is the purest form of development assistance through food aid, even though programme and emergency food aid may also have developmental consequences. Hence the “developmentalisation” of food aid.

¹⁹ See table 4.1.

Why is it argued that the multilateralisation of food aid represents a move away from the surplus disposal logic that is more characteristic of bilateral food aid? Suppose a state has consistently donated 50 000 tonnes of food aid (under some form of multilateral agreement, or at a minimum, through some multilateral organisation). It would be more difficult for such a state to deviate from its patterned behaviour, as it is expected to share in the burden. Further, in a multilateral institution a state invites verbal censure, at least, should it renege on previous commitments. With regard to the “disciplining” of changes in the bilateral behaviour of states, other states do not have recourse to the same institutionalised “code” (even though this varies depending on the issue-area/regime). It is not denied that consistent bilateral state behaviour can also be difficult to deviate from, but just that it is harder to deviate from patterned behaviour under multilateral auspices. Multilateral “patterned behaviour accompanied by shared expectations” becomes more “infused with normative significance” (Krasner, 1983a:18) than does patterned bilateral behaviour in the same issue area. Thus, the multilateralisation of food aid makes it harder for states *not* to provide food aid when they do not have agricultural surpluses. This is why the multilateralisation of food aid represents a move away from surplus driven food aid.

A caveat should be offered with regard to the multilateralisation of food aid, as the significance of the multilateralisation should not be exaggerated. The growing *proportion* of multilateral food aid is taken as an indication that food aid has moved away from its surplus disposal function, summoning as evidence the proportion of food aid delivered through the WFP, as opposed to bilateral or NGO deliveries. Proportionally, multilateral food aid has increased in relation to other channels since 1993, from 22% (1993) to 41 % in 1997. However, this proportional increase obfuscates the fact that the WFP has not delivered more than 4m tonnes of food aid since 1993, fluctuating between two and four million tonnes of food aid. In 1993 total world food aid donations amounted to almost 17m tonnes, but dropped to 6,6m tonnes in 1997. What these statistics tell us is that the proportion (and not so much the quantity) of world food given multilaterally has increased, but that great variation exists in food aid not channeled through the WFP. The great variation of non-WFP food aid is due to the vicissitudes of international agricultural prices/surpluses. The multilateralisation of food aid did also not prevent annual donations from falling

below the target of 10m tonnes per year set at the 1974 World Food Conference. This caveat with regard to the multilateralisation of food aid should also not lead us to overestimate the growth in the *developmental focus* of food aid, as this growth is much more proportional than it is absolute. Multilateral food aid remains significant, and thus warrants a consideration of why states support the multilateral channel as they do.

Sources: Many traditional middle powers²⁰ are not major agricultural producers/exporters, yet they remain dependable donors of food aid. In chapter 2, three reasons for such middle power altruism was identified. Firstly, generous food aid donations are expressions of strong national values regarding justice and equality, articulated through the foreign policy of the social-democratic middle power state. Secondly, on a systems level, middle powers seek to manage international conflict in order to counteract tensions that might pose a threat to the *status quo*, particularly through middle power support for international organisation. The donation of food aid is one way in which to assuage such tensions. Thirdly, middle power foreign policy elites are influential as the interface between international (top-down) pressures and domestic (bottom-up) pressures. Under duress from particularly the hegemon, middle power elites often buckle under international pressure, articulating their position in accordance with hegemonic wishes, but presenting the adopted position as their own in order to hide the violation of national sovereignty suffered under their leadership (Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990:58). The first two reasons for middle power altruism were fleshed out adequately enough in chapter 2 for them to simply be applied to food aid in particular. The third reason offered above, is an argument made less often, but is uncannily accurate as to how middle powers were drawn into the food aid regime.

The accession of middle powers into the FAC/food aid regime should not entirely be seen as behaviour fully motivated by altruism. Before the FAC of 1967, international food aid was virtually synonymous with US food aid (Shaw and Clay, 1993:5), as, in 1966, the US was providing 98% of total world food aid (Hopkins, 1992:234). Originally, the PL480 food aid programme of 1954 was first and foremost an explicit mechanism for agricultural surplus disposal. The US rhetorically attached

²⁰ See chapter 2 for the distinction between *traditional* middle powers and *emerging* middle powers.

humanitarian principles to its behaviour (the disposing of surpluses) and kept quiet about the selfish rationale for its food aid programme during the early years, even though it was still fairly obvious. Despite food aid initially being a selfish action, it did have positive effects in many instances. The point is just that the *raison d'être* of food aid (originally, at least) was hardly based on humanitarian concerns. When international grain markets tightened in the latter half of the 1960s, the US sought to induce “the acquiescence of other states” (Cox, 1983:172) to share the food aid *burden*²¹ (which it is during tight market conditions) (IGC, 1998a). (Bureaucratic permanence, as well as numerous groups with vested interests in sustaining a US food aid programme, for example, some farmers, the shipping industry, foreign governments, and so forth, prevented the unilateral termination of the American programme in the years before the multilateralisation of food aid during this period of tight grain markets). Despite initial European reluctance to include food aid as part of the International Grains Agreement²², the prospect of a stabilised international grains market and a sweetener of concessions on industrial products in the Kennedy Round offered by the US assured European compliance (Cathie, 1997:19). These states also ran the risk of being branded “free-riders”. The result was the first Food Aid Convention in 1967. Seventeen industrialised states, many of which were not major food exporters, like donors had traditionally been, and the industrialising Argentina, signed the agreement (Shaw and Clay, 1993:8; IGC, 1998a).

The humanitarian principles advocated by the US, on which food aid was supposedly based and which American advocacy gave “the appearance of a universal natural order of things” (Cox, 1996:243), left initial non-food aid donors without a normative recourse, courtesy of the power/knowledge foundations of the norms espoused by the US. The self-interest of the United States, in inducing other states to share the food aid during a period when the original motivation for food aid (surplus disposal) lost much of its appeal, must have been fairly apparent to states that were asked to join the

²¹ The gist of a Gramscian analysis by Cafruny (1990) suggests that the American inducement of others to share the food aid burden in the late 1960s is a sign of the hegemonic decline of the US. The US became unable/unwilling to provide leadership and manage the system single-handedly, as hegemons normally do. Instead, inducing burden-sharing reflected “a tendency of the United States to use power in ways that reflected national objectives and interests, often at the expense of its allies” (Cafruny, 1990:112).

FAC (which mostly did not have much agricultural surplus to dispose of). Yet, the cost (food aid) that the US was imposing on these states could hardly be resisted, especially after the promise of concessions in the Kennedy Round of GATT. Although middle powers did not necessarily buy into the apparent normative justifications for food aid (e.g. feeding the poor), they gradually began to support and espouse the moral case for food aid, for the reasons indicated by Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990:58), and which were dealt with in chapter 2.

These days, middle powers have come to view the donation of food aid as a legitimate exercise, even priding themselves on their contributions. Moreover, they are more consistent food aid donors than the USA. As will be made clearer at the end of chapter 5, the US has retreated from the food aid regime, repositioning itself to unleash its competitive agricultural exports on the world, while other states carry a larger share of the food aid burden.

Traditional middle powers are strong supporters of international organisation (Cox, 1996:243) as was indicated in the previous chapter. They are thus more inclined to channel their food aid through the WFP, as opposed to states that demonstrate less middle power tendencies, such as the US, which demonstrate more disregard for the WFP than do most other donors²³. By channeling food aid multilaterally, much of the (short-term) self-interest is dissipated, with these middle power donors acting in the belief that they are pulling their weight in the provision of an international public good. However, middle powers do not all donate similar quantities of food aid. It is important to discern whether a middle power is a major exporter of food (especially cereals) or not. Major food exporting middle powers generally donate much larger amounts of food aid than do net-food importing middle powers.

²² Formerly the International Wheat Agreement. The institutionally linked Grains Trade Convention and the Food Aid Convention, both of 1995, comprise the International Grains Agreement of 1995 (IGC, 1998a).

²³ If the diminished use of programme food aid is a further indicator of the developmentalisation of food aid (declining surplus disposal motivations), then, even in the case of major cereal exporting middle powers does one detect that these states use programme food aid to a lesser extent than does the US, particularly its Title I food aid line.

3.3.3. Agricultural production and middle power predisposition toward donating food aid

Official international agricultural prices are overstated, as they are in effect lowered by various bilateral agreements and export subsidies that are virtually impossible to document (Shaw and Singer, 1996:454). Surplus food has a price that is even lower than the market price, as surplus by definition denotes that which cannot be sold at the market price, only at a price lower than that set by the market mechanism, if at all. This simple economic truth is the reason why net-agricultural exporters generally give more food aid in relation to its capabilities than do net-agricultural importers.

Consider the similar commitments to the FAC of 1995 by Australia and Japan. Despite Japan's much larger GDP per capita income and ODA contributions to Third World states, both countries have committed to a minimum pledge of 0,3m tonnes. This seems to suggest that 0,3m tonnes of food aid have different costs for the two donors. Food aid is more expensive for the non-net agricultural exporting state than it is for Australia, even though Australia's agricultural sector is highly liberalised, no food stocks are maintained and food aid is paid for out of the aid budget (Shaw and Clay, 1993:143). Similarly, in 1994, Canada gave only slightly more ODA (in absolute dollar terms) to developing states, than did Norway. Yet Norway's commitment under the FAC of 1995 is only 20 000 tonnes, as opposed to the large agricultural exporting state's (Canada) commitment of twenty times more (400 000m tonnes).

Therefore, agricultural exporters are likely to donate more food aid than states with similar economic profiles, but which are not net-agricultural exporters. This trend can be viewed in conjunction with the positive tendency of states that approximate the role of middle powers to donate aid. States which are not major agricultural exporters, along with those that are, but pay for food aid out of its aid budget²⁴, are more reliable guarantors of a steady level of food aid, whereas net-agricultural exporters with an

²⁴ The presence of food aid in the aid budget, and not in the agricultural budget, suggests different motives for, and behind, giving food aid. In the case of the former, food aid is driven more of a concern for the recipients than in the latter, whereas surplus disposal plays a stronger role when paid for out of an agricultural budget.

element of surplus disposal in their programmes are not reliable for a steady flow of food aid, especially when agricultural prices are high. Let us briefly consider some of the food aid donors to demonstrate the interaction of the middle power role and status as agricultural exporter/importer in determining these states' respective food aid contributions.

Australia is a major exporter of cereals. It also aspires to a middle power role, and has a strong social welfare system, even though one will not find such entrenched social-democratic values as one would in the Scandinavian welfare states. The level of Australia's commitment under the FAC of 1995 has already been noted and compared to Japan. Australia's relatively large commitment under the FAC (0,3m tonnes), considering its limited capabilities, suggests, at a minimum, some gain for Australia. This gain might not necessarily accrue to the government, which pays for the aid budget, out of which food aid commodities are purchased from domestic producers. Australian food aid is not a case of the government trying to get rid surplus stock since it does not maintain stocks (Shaw and Clay, 1993:143), even though its purchasing of local stock does stimulate demand for agricultural products somewhat. However, in 1983, after a bad harvest, Australia purchased food on the world market to honour its FAC commitment (Shaw and Clay, 1993:144; Uvin, 1992:305). Paying for food aid out of the aid budget does create problems, as it usurps funds devoted to other forms of aid during periods of high agricultural prices, which forced Australia to curb its future commitment, following the price peaks of 1996 (Warr and Ahammad, 1997:170). Australia is not one of the top donors in terms of ODA per capita, but it does seem to aspire to play its part as good international citizen, especially with regard to food aid, if one considers that it channels about half of its food aid through multilateral organisations. Its contribution would be less were it not a major exporter of cereals.

Canada is an interesting case as food aid donor. It is a major exporter of cereals, and is in many ways a typical middle power, given its mid-range capabilities. It is however a member of the "inner-circle", the Group of Seven (G-7), and is constrained as such. Thérien and Noël (1994:536) note that "[i]n general, Canada's aid performance appears generous by comparison with other G-7 countries. The picture changes, however, when Canadian policies are compared with those of the small

countries of Northern Europe” with which it is often compared. Given the correlation between domestic social spending and the willingness to give foreign aid, Thérien and Noël (1994:545-547) draw a distinction between different types of welfare states, among others the (Anglo-Saxon) liberal welfare state and the social democratic welfare state. Canada falls under the first category, which involves a social safety net but relies on market-based private insurance. The values on which the liberal welfare state is founded seem particularly vulnerable to the social spending discipline (and rollback) induced by the “Washington consensus”²⁵. Another category, social democratic welfare states, as found in Scandinavia, are built around “universal programmes embodying social rights” and are less negative about the idea of social welfare being in the hands of the state. Thus, social democratic welfare states are hypothetically more resistant against assaults on this virtually fundamental aspect of Scandinavian life.

Canadian food aid is very similar to that of Australia. Canada’s agricultural prominence enables it to be the largest per capita food aid donor in the world (Shaw and Clay, 1993:156). Canada has increased the proportion of food aid it channels through the WFP to about 50%. As with Australia, programme food aid accounts for about 20% of its total food aid. Programme food aid is dubious, as it is often believed to be a form of surplus disposal. However, unlike the US, Canadian (and Australian) programme food aid is entirely on a grant basis. Drainage of Canada’s ODA budget is prevented by the capping food aid levels in dollar terms. For Canada, surplus disposal nevertheless remains a possibility when required (Saran and Konandreas, 1991:41).

European food aid consists of fourteen national food aid programmes and one run by the European Commission. Together, these programmes are making Europe a donor of increasing importance, having provided 32% of total world food aid in 1997 (WFP, 1998a). The Commission programme provides between a half and two-thirds of total European food aid (Singer, Wood and Jennings, 1987:25) and has sought to establish its own identity as a donor, to not just be a reflection and extension of dominant national donors, even though complete independence is impossible and inherently

²⁵ For a discussion of the structural constraints on Canadian aid policies, see Black, Thérien and Clark (1996).

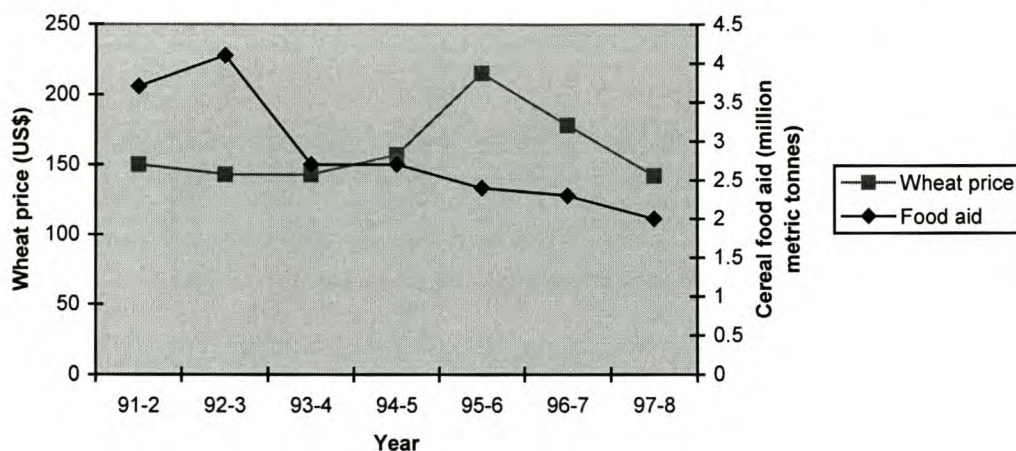
restricted by member states (Cathie, 1997:29). Talbot (1993:155) notices how the European Commission has aggressively sought to strengthen its authority vis-à-vis that of the member states (sometimes referred to as “Community dialogue”), with food aid becoming yet another aspect of European policy-making, instead of it being done by national governments. The EU programme has a strong multilateral focus with regard to food aid, as this provides a solution to the inevitable conflict that would arise if a reconciliation of the fourteen national food aid programmes was to be attempted (Cathie, 1997:75). The EU distributes about a third of its food aid through the UN system (mainly the WFP) (Shaw and Clay, 1993:169 and Cathie, 1997:89). Its bilateral food aid programme is used to build a European food aid donor identity, as distinct and independent as possible from national European programmes. Contributions to the EU programme vary from donor to donor, as no enforced minimum contribution exists.

The number of people employed in the European agricultural sector has dropped from 21% in 1961 to 7% in 1990. Agriculture’s share as a percentage of the output of the EU’s GDP had been halved from 1973 to 1990, and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is now commanding an even bigger share of the European budget relative to its contribution to total EU GDP (Keeler, 1996:127). Despite agriculture’s shrinking economic contribution and the great expense of agricultural support, the CAP has withstood major reform. One therefore wonders if the surplus production that has characterised the CAP in recent times will decrease, especially as the Agreement on Agriculture decreed a reduction of the export subsidies which the EU used to employ to get rid of some of its surplus. Some exceptions and loopholes in the 36% reduction in export subsidies ordained under the Uruguay Round do exist, providing an outlet for European production. In light of a relatively unchanged CAP, which would have little disruption on production levels, one can expect the need for a surplus outlet to remain. Food aid, to some extent, has served to justify the excesses of the CAP, but food aid remains a by-product of the CAP, rather than primary motivating factor (Singer, 1987:334).

Despite the fact that European food aid used to be strongly motivated by surplus disposal needs, the consensus seems to be that European food aid has become more “developmental”. Cathie (1997:47-60) sees European food aid as having been

delinked from surplus availability and world agricultural price, although Saran and Konandreas (1991:40) disagree. The EU has been able to increase its food aid, as evidenced by the “additionality” of the (food) it provided to the former Eastern bloc countries and Soviet republics. Furthermore, European food aid is not as self-interested as that of the US, as all food aid is given as a grant (as opposed to the US that sells much of its food aid on concessional terms). The Commission has also delinked trade interests from food aid considerations. The decline of European dairy food aid indicates a greater concern with the needs of food aid recipients, as dairy food aid, which is not cost-effective and rather expensive, accounted for more than half of EU food aid costs during the late 1970s and 1980s (Clay and Stokke, 1991:11). Even though European food aid might not be surplus driven in any strict sense, Cathie (1997:51) overstates his case when he claims that European food aid is unrelated to world prices (see figure 3.6). European cereal food aid peaked in 1993 with 4,1m tonnes, at around the time world agricultural prices started rising. By the time prices peaked in 1996, European cereal food aid had fallen to 2,4m tonnes, a decline of about 35%²⁶ (USAID, 1998). This decline indicates a clear relationship between European food aid and agricultural prices. One should however be careful of the general claim that European food aid declined because of a lessened need for surplus disposal. Such a statement might hold true for a major agricultural exporter such as France, but many European states are net-food importers with little need for agricultural surplus disposal. Food aid increases in opportunity cost vis-à-vis other parts of the aid budgets as agricultural prices rise, explaining decreased food aid. The UK, for example, views food aid as an inferior form of aid (Cathie, 1997:41) and would therefore have had little tolerance for rising food aid costs that displace other aid programmes.

²⁶ Over the same period US cereal food aid decreased from 8,5m tonnes in 1993 to 2,8m tonnes in 1996, a drop of about 70% (USAID, 1998).

Figure 3.7. European food aid and the wheat price, 1991-98

Source: IGC in *World Grain* (various issues) and USAID (1998).

Some variation can be found among the national food aid programmes of the European member states. Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands have the strongest multilateral orientation, consistent with their middle power roles. Germany has the largest national programme, and shows great altruism in its food aid, as it makes frequent use triangular transactions, does not make use of programme food aid, and has severed the link with surplus disposal objectives. France is the most self-interested food aid donor in the EU, with surplus disposal being a prevalent objective of its food aid programme. French food aid is not paid for out of the national aid budget, indicating a weaker position of altruistic interests vis-à-vis national agricultural interests than found in other European states. French food aid further corresponds with national foreign policy and commercial interests. Furthermore, France does not make use of triangular transactions, nor does it buy commodities for donation outside its national borders. Of all the European food aid programmes, Cathie (1997:39) regards French food aid as being closest to the US PL480 programme, in which economic and political self-interest is often explicit. Italian food aid shows more similarities with the French programme than with the German (Cathie, 1997:40).

This chapter has shown that world food aid on aggregate is driven by agricultural surplus disposal, and to be intimately connected with world cereal prices. The size of

the American contribution to world food aid creates the impression that all food aid is driven by the existence of agricultural surplus. However, surplus disposal is less of a factor for states that approximate the middle power role in the hegemonic order (e.g. through the provision of food aid). But, even within this group of states performing the middle power role, does agricultural surplus availability influence the size and consistency of food aid donations.

Chapter 4 - The food aid regime

4.1. Introduction

Before 1967, food aid was provided by only three donors, namely the US, Canada and Australia, albeit that international food aid was synonymous with the American food aid programme, which provided more than 95% of world cereal food aid during the mid-1960s (Hopkins, 1992:234; Shaw and Clay, 1991:5). During a period of tightening grain markets, the US goaded many other industrialised states into sharing the food aid burden. Despite initial European reluctance to include food aid as part of the International Grains Agreement¹, the prospect of a stabilised international grains market and a sweetener of concessions on industrial products in the Kennedy Round offered by the US assured European compliance (Cathie, 1997:19). The result was the first Food Aid Convention (FAC) in 1967. Seventeen industrialised states, many of which were not major food exporters, like donors had traditionally been, and the industrialising Argentina signed the agreement (Shaw and Clay, 1993:8; IGC, 1998a). The FAC of 1967 set a binding minimum annual commitment of 4,5m tonnes of food aid, less than half the quantity the US originally sought to procure.

Under the FACs of 1980 and 1986, the minimum annual total commitment was increased to 7,6m tonnes. This increase reflected an effort by the international community to reach the (non-binding) target of 10m tonnes annually set at the 1974 World Food Conference (IGC, 1998a), and which had been reached in most years. In 1995, the FAC total minimum obligation was reduced to 5,4m tonnes.

The self-interested behaviour of certain donor states has already been implied. Before the first FAC (1967), the US happily supplied food aid that was, at that stage, solely a self-interested action, as the US needed a vent for its agricultural surpluses. With the tightening grains market situation in the mid-1960s, the need for agricultural surplus disposal abated, thereby raising the cost of food aid, yet the demand for and expectation of food aid that had been created, remained. The demand and expectation

¹ Formerly the International Wheat Agreement. The institutionally linked Grains Trade Convention and the Food Aid Convention, both of 1995, comprise the International Grains Agreement of 1995 (IGC, 1998).

that had been created prevented, along with typical bureaucratic permanency, the outright termination of the US food aid programme. As a result, when the (opportunity) cost of food aid increased, the US sought to share the food aid burden, no doubt appealing to various humanitarian principles, despite the final material considerations (for both the US and the EU) which facilitated the agreement.

Table 4.1. Minimum annual commitments under the 1967, 1986 and 1995 Food Aid Conventions

Donor	Metric tonnes	Metric tonnes	Metric tonnes
	1967	1986	1995
Argentina	N/A.	35 000	35 000
Australia	225 000	300 000	300 000
Canada	495 000	600 000	400 000
EU	1 034 000	1 670 000	1 755 000
Japan	225 000	300 000	300 000
Norway	N/A.	30 000	20 000
Sweden	N/A.	40 000	joined EU
Switzerland	N/A.	27 000	40 000
United Kingdom	225 000	joined EU	joined EU
USA	1 890 000	4 470 000	2 500 000
Total	4 500 000	7 600 000	5 350 000

Sources: Shaw and Clay (1993:3), International Grains Council (1998a) and Talbot (1993:157).

The chronic food shortages of the 1970s belatedly led to an increase in the minimum obligation under the FAC of 1980. Agricultural production expanded greatly at the end of the 1970s to meet the growing demand. The second oil shock, Reagan's monetarist policies, which were partly in response to the increase in oil prices, resulted in the debt crises experienced by many Third World states during the 1980s. Increased inability to pay for imports undermined the demand for agricultural products that existed during the 1970s. The first half of the 1980s was therefore a period of huge stock overhangs, an accommodating factor insofar as the donation of food aid was concerned.

International cereal market conditions were once more reflected in the reduction of the FAC from 7,6m tonnes to 5,4m tonnes in 1995. Price rises after 1993 and

shrinking (public) stocks made food aid commodities more costly and harder to acquire. The dearth of agricultural surplus is thus reflected in the unwillingness of donors (mainly the US) to commit themselves to the provision of increasingly costly food aid. The counter-cyclical tendency of food aid with cereal prices, as indicated by the 1995 FAC reduction, once more demonstrated that in many cases humanitarian concern is not the prime motivating force behind food aid levels.

In chapter 2 we noted that the behavioural and normative dimensions of regimes are not that easy to separate, and neither are the direction and magnitude of causality between these two dimensions. However, we have noted some of the behavioural changes that have occurred². Hopkins (1992) traces the evolution of four of the more important normative principles of the food aid regime. The evolved “consensus” (Hopkins, 1992) on food aid can be summarised as (expert) agreement that food aid should be less surplus driven (the most important change/claim for our purposes); that it should not be a disincentive to recipient agricultural production; that it should be given with a longer term commitment; and that it should be more development and less relief oriented. Despite “consensus” on these principles by the epistemic community on food aid, the extent to which these principles are realised in practice is debatable.

The principal international agreement pertaining to food aid has been considered briefly. The principal multilateral organisation that deals with food aid is the World Food Programme (WFP). The UN General Assembly and the FAO Conference founded the WFP in 1961 through concomitant resolutions. Initially, the WFP was to be an experimental organisation with a budget of approximately \$100m for its three-year probation period (1963-65) (Shaw and Clay, 1991:4). In 1997, the organisation’s annual expenditure had grown to \$1,2bn since its modest beginning, making it the largest development agency after the World Bank (Charlton, 1997:444; WFP, 1998b).

Donors vary in the support they give to the WFP. Middle powers such as Australia, Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands donate more than half their food aid

² I am thinking of declining surplus availability starting in the late 1960s, the “world food crisis” of the early 1970s, more states participating in the food aid regime, the gradually smaller role performed by the United States in the food aid regime, etc.

multilaterally, as opposed to the US and the EU which are predominantly bilateral donors (Shaw and Clay, 1993:2). Multilateral aid should not always be viewed as necessarily less politicised than bilateral food aid. The independence of the WFP as a multilateral organisation is undermined by the fact that up to 70% of the donor pledges to the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) (which is managed by the WFP) are “directed” (Shaw and Clay, 1993:25).

Young (1983:98-101) has identified three ways in which international behaviour can be patterned and thereby lead to the development into a regime. He distinguishes between spontaneous orders, negotiated orders, and two types of imposed orders (overt hegemony and de facto imposition). These three patterns of regime development are not mutually exclusive, nor does the mix of development factors necessarily remain the same. Most of these growth factors are detectable in the development of the food aid regime. The dynamism of the food aid can be recognised in the changing mix of reasons for participating.

The food aid regime came about largely as a “negotiated order”, with the first FAC of 1967. During the negotiations that preceded the signing of the FAC³, a strong element of “de facto imposition” was also present, as the US promoted “institutional arrangements favourable to itself through various forms of leadership and the manipulation of incentives”⁴ (Young, 1983:101). Gradually, the amount of “imposition” in patterning food aid behaviour abated, and compliance with regime principles became more consensual, largely due to the increasing role of middle powers, as explained in chapters 2 and 3. The degree of “spontaneous” compliance increased in later years, as states started contributing to the food aid regime out of their own volition, despite many having no agricultural surplus to dispose of.

What is the link between understanding food aid since 1993, particularly its drastic decline and the food aid regime? The explanation that will be offered here is that the food aid regime was too weak to prevent the most powerful state and food aid donor,

³ The FAC formed part of the larger International Wheat Agreement, which later became the International Grains Agreement.

⁴ The “manipulation of incentives” referred to are the concessions on industrial goods offered by the US in the Kennedy Round of GATT (Cathie, 1997:19).

the US, from unilaterally reducing its share of the international burden. This did not happen before a food aid regime had been established, from which the US has gradually been withdrawing. Two questions follow: Firstly, why and how did the US reduce its commitment? The answer to “why” the US reduced its commitment lies in the surplus disposal logic of much American food aid, and the disappearing need for it during a period of high international agricultural prices (chapter 3). The answer to the “how” lies in the relative independence of action the US enjoys, courtesy of its hegemonic position (chapter 2). Secondly, why have states other than the US continued their commitment (reduced it less than the US), even though food aid became more expensive for them as well, during recent years? The answer lies in the supporting role middle powers play in maintaining the current world order, as manifested in the developmentalisation of food aid (chapters 2 and 3). The deviation of middle powers away from direct self-interest and the absence of continued pressure from the hegemon indicate the existence of a food aid regime, despite the regime having little effect on the USA.

The existence of the FAC and the WFP, the GATT/WTO, FAO, International Grains Agreement, the CSD, and so forth suggests a fairly “formal” international food aid regime (Puchala and Hopkins, 1983:65,76). Yet, the formality of a regime does not necessarily result in desired outcomes being attained. The principal outcome the food aid regime seeks to realise is as high (and consistent) a food aid level as possible. Food aid levels are seen as a function of direct hegemonic self-interest (though this depends on agricultural prices) and the acceptance and internalisation of the principles of the food aid regime by non-hegemonic states (see figure 4.1.).

In chapter 2 the framework for a typology of regimes was sketched. On the one axis one can adjudge the extent to which regime concurs with direct hegemonic self-interest. On the other axis the compliance of non-hegemonic states with established patterns of behaviour *after* the (actual or theorised) withdrawal⁵ of the hegemon from the regime is indicated (see figure 4.1). The problem, of course, is that typologies do not allow for a dynamic view of these two dimensions. With regard to the food aid

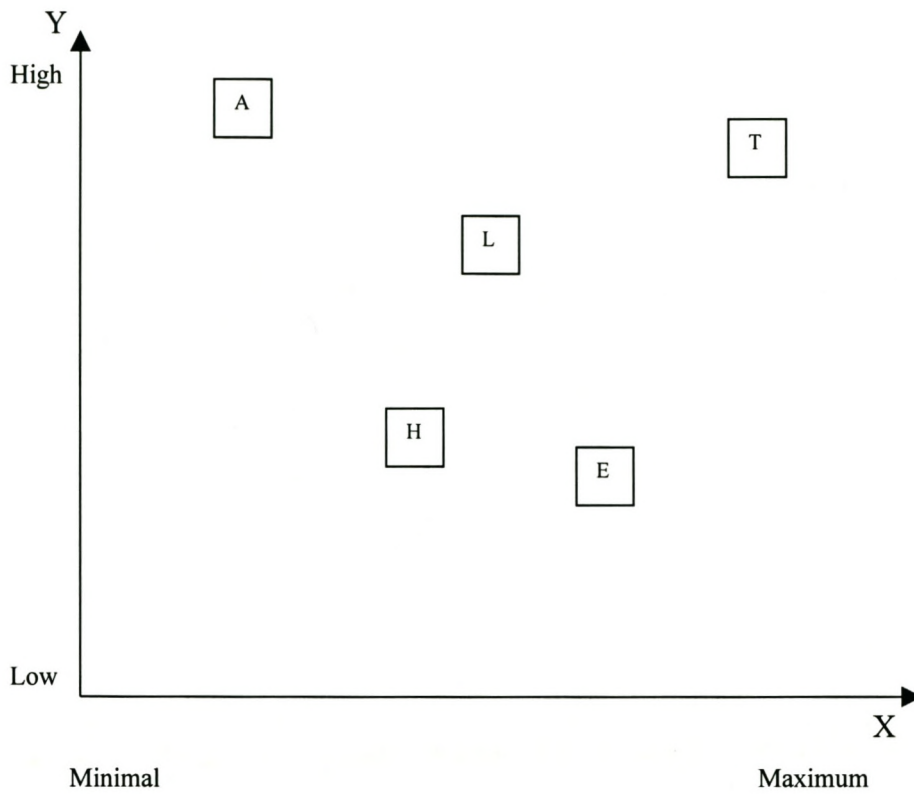
⁵ The assumption is that hegemonic withdrawal from the regime occurs when its short-term interests are not served by contributing to the regime.

regime, American attitudes toward the regime change basically when cereal prices change.

As has been mentioned, the principal outcome the food aid regime seeks to procure is as high a level of food aid as possible. The highest level of food aid that can be attained will be when the intersection of two perpendicular lines from the two axes meet in the top right-hand corner. A point high on the Y-axis, but low on X, will indicate a relatively high level of food aid, but this level cannot be imputed to be consistent, as it will drop as soon as cereal prices rise, and the direct hegemonic interest for giving food aid (disposing of agricultural surplus) dissipates. It is not inconceivable that the self-interest of other states concurs with that of the US, especially other major agricultural producers. However, other major agricultural producers, are more constrained by regime rules than is the hegemon, so one can expect them to have internalised regime principles to a fair extent. A point high on the X-axis, but low on Y will yield a more consistent level of food aid, given the large-scale negation (or absence) of direct and short-term self-interest. A characterisation of the food aid regime during a period of high international cereal prices will score rather low on the Y-axis, but reasonably high on the X-axis. During a time of low agricultural prices, scores on both axes will be quite high, given the lesser amount of pain involved in “compliance”. Let us now characterise other regimes in terms of the typology (figure 4.1.) that has been developed. The other regimes that will be considered are the international aviation regime, the free trade regime and the environmental regime.

In the international aviation regime, states with internationally competitive carriers prefer “open skies”, whereby market forces determine capacity, frequency and points of entry for carriers. States with less competitive national carriers prefer a more protectionist aviation regime. The US, as a mercantilist strategy, has advocated liberalism in international aviation markets, given the competitiveness of its airlines. The US has used both carrot and stick to secure liberalisation, but this strategy has not proved entirely successful (Nayar, 1995:163-166). However, the sovereignty principle is still highly respected in aviation, allowing for an easier and more acceptable retreat into protectionism. Nayar (1995:169) concludes that “even bilateral agreements have

Figure 4.1. Regime persistence and direct hegemonic self-interest



Axis values:
X-axis: Compliance of lesser states with established patterns of behaviour
Y-axis: Direct hegemonic self-interest

Symbols and regime goal:
A – Aviation regime (open skies)
E – Environmental regime (general environmental conservation and protection)
H – Food aid regime during high cereal prices (*max. food aid levels*)
L – Food aid regime during low cereal prices (*max. food aid levels*)
T – Free trade regime (maximum openness of trade)

not been characterised by durability...[N]o single [aviation] regime has developed, let alone a *durable* and effective one” (own emphasis).

The free trade regime (epitomised by GATT-WTO) is characterised by a high degree of compliance by all member states, and as being of great benefit to the state with the most powerful economy in the world, the US. In the case of aviation, the sovereignty principle is still an acceptable excuse behind which states with less competitive airlines can hide. In the case of trade, the opposite seems true. The orthodoxy of hyperliberal ideas and norms, as well as the shift from an *international economic order* to a *transnational liberal economic order* (Gill, 1990:88), have undermined the legitimacy and acceptability of invoking national economic sovereignty. At the moment, the US is still a very prominent promoter of trade liberalisation (and is indicated as such in figure 4.1.). Should the US unilaterally renege on its commitment to free trade, the maintaining of the free trade regulations is to be doubted, as this would leave states open to exploitation, but also because much international trade liberalisation has been procured through structural American power, making the acquiescence of lesser states to the regulations of the free trade regime seem more voluntary than is necessarily the case.

The environmental regime, differs from the other regimes mentioned here in that states have played much less of role in its development, compared to the other regimes (Meyer, *et al*, 1997:627). Meyer, *et al* (1997) see the formation of the environmental regime as having been driven by non-state actors and the dissemination of environmental scientific discourse into international society, resulting in the growing institutionalisation of environmental protection issues. Following this argument, one finds a high level of acceptance of the general principles of the environmental regime in international civil society. States, by contrast, have proved fairly reluctant to participate in international environmental decision-making, leadership, discipline and ratification (Meyer *et al*, 1997:627). Environmental protection is not very high on the American political agenda, as its conspicuous consumption has caused the US to be one of the major polluters in the world. However, inflicting the costs of environmental protection onto their own voters, seems like something US politicians want to avoid at all costs. One can therefore infer that the “withdrawal” of the US from the environmental regime would not affect

overall regime outcomes⁶ as much, as this is pretty how much how the environmental regime has always existed.

What can we deduce from the comparison of these four regimes? Direct hegemonic interest does not guarantee desirable regime outcomes are achieved, or even that a regime develops, as with the aviation regime, as some agreement on the principles is necessary. However, direct hegemonic interest definitely helps, as one can see in the cases of the food aid and free trade regimes. Non-support, or even opposition, from the hegemon to what a regime seeks to accomplish is a severe restriction to the international implementation of preferred outcomes (from the regime's perspective). One finds that environmental lobby groups are influential at local and even national levels, but their pressure at an international level have not imposed major costs on states at the core of the world economy.

In chapter 2 it was stated that an international organisation institutionalises at least part of a broader regime. The World Food Programme (WFP) is the international organisation most directly concerned with food aid, although it does not distribute all the food aid in the international system. The WFP distributes virtually all intergovernmental multilateral food aid (as opposed to non-governmental multilateral food aid). The WFP is not the only international organisation that is concerned with food aid, and consequently reference is made to other institutions somehow connected to food aid, for example, GATT-WTO and the FAO.

International organisations are important in a Coxian framework as they provide stability to the world order, a status quo from which the dominant powers benefit greatly and which they do not want to see undermined. Though international organisations can take on some independence, this independence is circumscribed by the problem-solving approach of these organisations. Cox (1994:111-12), however, is optimistic that certain international organisations and agencies could provide the breeding ground for counter-hegemony, although I do not share his optimism⁷. The problem-solving role which international organisations fulfil, and their dependence on

⁶ The "outcome" that the environmental regime aims for, is a less destructive interaction of man with nature.

⁷ Gareau (1996:227), another neo-Gramscian theorist, is even more optimistic about this possibility.

the West, prevent them, almost *a priori*, to challenge international inequality or injustice in any fundamental way that might threaten core interests in the world economy.

The purpose of the following section is to demonstrate how international organisation hinder any fundamental critique of the global agricultural system or the (increasing) inequality one finds in it. This prevents deep-lying changes, the need for which is often muted by the (low level of) stable food aid guaranteed by the multilateralisation of food aid. Cox (1983:172) mentions five characteristics of international organisation related to its role in preserving the hegemonic order. International organisations: embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders; are themselves the product of the hegemonic world order; ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order; co-opt the elites from peripheral countries; and absorb counter-hegemonic ideas. These five roles can be seen as the *structurally* supportive function of international organisations.

4.2. Food aid, international organisations and hegemonic order

4.2.1. International organisations and rules that facilitate hegemonic expansion

Augelli and Murphy (1993:133-8) demonstrate how the Reagan Administration quashed the political challenge posed by the Third World in the form of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), by destroying the economic bedrock of the potentially counter-hegemonic bloc. The world economy was free to be shaped without influence from the former proponents of the NIEO. Following the demise of the NIEO, Third World agriculture, an area in which the Third World used to be highly competitive, was decimated by subsidised Northern agricultural exports, the Third World without political recourse or influence to defend their agricultural sectors.

From the majority once having been food exporters, most Sub-Saharan states have become food importers, the one product that they can produce cost effectively given the low levels of technological advancement required and the abundance of cheap

labour. Albeit that Sub-Saharan states are treated differentially under the Uruguay Round, they had little choice in whether or not to accept the Uruguay Round, which included the Agreement on Agriculture. Despite some protection from the exigencies of the world agricultural markets being promised to Low Income Net-Food Importing Countries, their immediate food needs have been connected to trade. Even at the 1996 World Food Summit was the belief in the beneficence of the “free” market confirmed. In a joint declaration by participating governments they promised that they will “strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to food security for all *through a fair and market-oriented market system*” (my emphasis) (quoted in Watkins, 1996:244). This means an acceptance of the principle that food needs have to be satisfied with imports from countries with a comparative advantage in the specific agricultural product, but with the possibility of food aid when needed.

Since the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, world agricultural prices have skyrocketed, food aid has reached its lowest level in decades, and the aspect of the Uruguay Round promising food aid has obviously not come to fruition, despite a Ministerial Decision agreeing “to establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the implementation of the results of the Uruguay Round on trade in agriculture does not adversely affect the availability of food aid at a level which is sufficient to continue to provide assistance in meeting the food needs of developing countries, especially least developed and net food-importing developing countries” (GATT Secretariat, 1998). Food aid is still connected to agricultural surplus, despite promises and analyses to the contrary.

For the Sub-Saharan states that are signatories of the GATT/WTO, there seems little escape. Free trade obviously benefits the industrialised exporters of the North, and even the world on aggregate in terms of income rise. The advantage of the Uruguay Round for Sub-Saharan Africa remains dubious. By the year 2000, it has been predicted that Africa’s small export surplus in agricultural trade will turn into a small agricultural trade deficit (FAO, 1995c:67), to not even mention African helplessness against manufactured products from outside its borders following the implementation of the Uruguay Round. Sub-Saharan Africa has been connected to the free trading

world economy, and its food needs have been subjugated to free trade principles and liberalised market realities.

The trade imperative was to be guaranteed over and above the aid imperative by the FAO Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSD). The CSD acts according to the FAO Principles of Surplus Disposal and Consultative Obligations, the basic aim of which is to prevent food aid from disrupting usual agricultural export channels. The concern was obviously to prevent unfair (subsidised trade), but an argument could also be presented that contravention of CSD Principles would undermine Third World agricultural production, but to argue that concern with the Third World played much of role for the CSD seems naive. Circumvention of FAO Principles, and thus the displacement of commercial exports to Sub-Saharan African states, implies the lowering of the price of related food items, thus becoming a disincentive to local production⁸. CSD or not, Third World agriculture was severely damaged by the agricultural trade wars of the 1980s between the US and the EU, which drove international agricultural prices down through subsidies. The effectiveness of the CSD has been described as dubious (Singer, Wood and Jennings, 1987:197) and an agency which nobody pays much attention to, in any case (Uvin, 1992:305). The CSD is generally believed to have permitted that which it was supposed to prevent, namely the displacement of commercial imports by food aid (Saran and Konandreas, 1991:53). Third World governments have further hamstrung their own agricultural producers by taxing their produce to subsidise food in urban areas for political reasons, and taxing agricultural exports to earn easy revenue for the government coffers, making them internationally less competitive.

To conclude, for the food aid regime, the Uruguay Round reiterated the supreme importance of free trade as a solution to world hunger. Free trade is the axis from which food aid has become a mere spin-off. Solving world hunger, as a priority, has had to play second fiddle to the priority of free trade, which has become powerfully institutionalised and enforced. The inclusion of food aid under the Uruguay Round of GATT, is an acknowledgement of the problem of food shortages and its connection

⁸ See Raffer and Singer (1996:83-4) on the problems of thinking in such neo-classical economic terms and thereby assuming the disincentive effect.

with agricultural liberalisation. The need for food aid is considered to be a temporary aberration in a liberalised world economy, which is touted to be the only feasible form for the world economy to take by those in positions of influence. Blame for hardship endured by peoples of the Third World has been lain at the door of the domestic policies, rather than the exigencies of the global economy (Augelli and Murphy, 1993:136).

4.2.2. International organisations as the product of the hegemonic order

International organisations reflect the prevailing power relations at their point of origin, and is a product of that world order, but international organisations are not just automatically churned out by the hegemonic world order. Cox is aware of the intentionality required for the creation of an international organisation when he states that “[i]nternational institutions *and rules* are generally initiated by the state which establishes the hegemony” (my emphasis) (Cox, 1983:172). Deliberate action by the hegemon is thus normally a prerequisite for the creation of an international organisation.

During the creation years of international institutions and rules, the “dominant state takes care to secure the acquiescence of other states according to a hierarchy of powers within the inter-state structure of hegemony” (Cox, 1983:172). Much of the food aid regime developed out of American self-interested behaviour, originally. Before the FAC 1967, international food aid was virtually synonymous with US food aid (Shaw and Clay, 1993:5), as, in 1966, the US was providing 98% of total world food aid (Hopkins, 1992:234). The PL480 food aid programme was primarily an explicit mechanism for agricultural surplus disposal. When international grain markets tightened in the latter half of the 1960s, the US sought to induce “the acquiescence of other states” (Cox, 1983:172) to share the food aid burden (IGC, 1998). The original signatories to the FAC of 1967 had little choice in whether to assist or not in the international problem of world hunger by providing an international public good such as food aid, as they would have been branded as “free-riders”.

Much deal-making and arm-twisting was involved in procuring the acquiescence of Japan, the UK and the (then) European Economic Community (EEC) in signing the first FAC in 1967. Nowadays, states pride themselves on their contributions to international food aid, as “[p]atterns of behaviour that persist over extended periods are infused with normative significance” (Krasner, 1983a:9). New members of the food aid regime join voluntarily, driven by what one could describe as a bottom-up imperative for joining. The inclination of these states to continue and to increase their contributions to the annual food aid minimum set by the FAC was in correspondence with the “middle power” role performed by many of these countries⁹.

Cooper (1994:3), as well as Pratt (1990:14), note how the issue-areas that to which middle powers are paying increasing attention in the 1990s are “*low* (his emphasis) issues such as poverty and human welfare, ecology and human rights” (Cooper, 1994:3). Food aid would, of course, qualify as a “low” issue, even though the motives for giving food aid are not always in strict accordance with those that motivate concern for the “low” issues mentioned above. International organisations offer middle powers a forum through which to exert their influence, given their lack of (structural) power on a global scale (Pratt, 1990:15). The commitment of middle powers toward sustaining the international food aid regime, contrary to the US, was demonstrated by the reduction of the US of its annual commitment under the FAC 1995 by nearly 50%, leaving an increased proportion of food aid to be provided by donors other than the US.

What the continued support of the middle powers under the FAC demonstrates is how a principle has become established that used to be (and still is) in the hegemon’s interest, can now be procured without any effort on the hegemon’s behalf. The hegemon can even decrease its effort in sustaining and ensuring the provision of such a public good. The food aid regime developed out of the surplus disposing PL480

⁹ A caveat should be offered with regard to Argentina. Its contribution under the FAC is most probably not due to its ambition to be seen as a middle power, but can rather be explained in terms of its role as a major agricultural exporter. Argentina is regarded as a developing country, which normally do not give substantial aid to others, as these countries are simply too poor. However, Argentina is a major exporter of agricultural products, and its commitment of 0,3 m tonnes under the 1995 FAC should be viewed as proof of the need for the disposal of the produce for which there exists no effective demand, rather than the desire of industrialised states to incur some of the expenses of international development aid on a developing state.

programme, it drew other donors into the regime during the tight agricultural market conditions and since then principles such as feeding the hungry in poor countries have assumed the appearance of a natural international norm. On this point it is interesting to note the echo Cox (1996:243) provides: “The rules and practices and ideologies of a hegemonic order conform to the interests of the dominant power while having the appearance of a universal natural order of things which gives at least a certain measure of satisfaction and security to lesser powers....The [hegemonic] order does not usually need to be enforced by direct violence or threat of violence on the part of the founding power. Middle powers may play a supporting role in such a hegemonic order”. What then is the place of norms in the global political economy, particularly as they pertain to international food aid?

4.2.3. Legitimising the norms of the world order

In lieu of the above, what is the status of norms in the world? Nel (1998:106) draws a useful distinction between “norms” and “moral beliefs”. He views *norms* “as moral beliefs that have become so institutionalised in a specific setting that they can be expected to be a significant contextual constraining and motivating factor”, whereas *moral beliefs* lack the institutional and behaviour constraining/enabling force of norms. What causes the institutionalisation and behaviour affecting strengthening of moral beliefs into norms?

The moral desirability of and the responsibility to assist the hungry can be found in virtually religious systems. Furthermore, the option of people under the “veil of ignorance” in John Rawls’s “original position” would be one in which they would at least want their physiological needs to be satisfied. In other words, a moral belief that the hungry ought to be fed is not without recourse or foundation internationally, even though one cannot necessarily attribute an ethereal quality to such a moral claim.

What is the relationship between a moral belief, such as an obligation to feed the hungry, and the global political economy? As Krasner (1993) demonstrates in his article on the abolition of the slave trade in the nineteenth century, a (moral) principle is usually adhered to when backed up by a powerful (hegemonic) advocate. In other

words, for a moral belief to become a norm (in Nel's terms) it needs to be backed up by some form of power¹⁰. Hegemonic power provides the means for a moral belief to assume the status of an international norm. Moral beliefs do not just immediately become international norms due to the normative bias of the hegemonic order, as then all the moral beliefs typical to the hegemon would be converted into norms. Rather, it requires some intentionality, the will of some actor to institutionalise a moral value. The origin of the process whereby a moral belief "becomes" a norm, lies in the national body politic, where some group (e.g. the farming lobby) identifies food aid to somehow be in the national interest. From a domestic political base states then attempt to institutionalise certain moral principles internationally, however hypocritical the reasons for doing so may be. Obviously, some states are more able to shape the normative world order than others, with the US possessing over most of this ability. It should be noted that international society would not internalise any moral belief foreign to it. Cultural or historical precedence facilitates the acceptance of certain moral beliefs¹¹.

There are thousands of potentially contradictory moral imperatives in international society. It follows that a moral principle can expediently be attached to self-interested behaviour to give it a semblance of respectability, as the US did with the original food aid programme, after which it assumed its own independent normative influence. With the signing of the 1967 FAC, seventeen industrialised states gave a legal foundation to the normative principle of feeding the hungry in other parts of the world, many signatories recalling their own experiences during and shortly after the Second World War.

The principle of combating world hunger is given institutional status in the WFP, ensuring some permanence in the short to medium term with regard to food aid. Through the WFP, the seeming willingness of the North to assist the needy in the

¹⁰ I use power in a structural and relational sense. In Krasner's article power is more relational, as Britain's structural power was qualitatively not the same in the nineteenth century, as that of the US in the second half of the twentieth century. The US hegemony is of a different nature, mainly due to the technological advances in fields such as telecommunications and media (mostly controlled by the US and its allies), and the military (where American superiority dwarfs whoever is second). International forums in which to solve international problems also did not exist as they do today.

¹¹ In light of this, it is interesting to note that the right to food was enshrined in 1948 by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Maxwell, 1997:469).

South is demonstrated. It could be argued that the solution for world hunger lies not with giving food aid, but rather with the international agricultural trading system. Northern agriculture is protected and subsidised, making it extremely difficult for Southern states to export their produce to these lucrative markets. This is a disincentive for agricultural production in the South, worsened by the erosion of preferential treatment after the Uruguay Round and its doctrinaire application of free trade. By subsidising their agricultural exports to the South for domestic reasons, the incentive to produce locally is further undermined, as food can be imported more cheaply than it can be produced domestically. The WFP obfuscates this argument, fulfilling a stopgap role without *critically* (in the Coxian sense of the word) addressing the deeper issues¹².

4.2.4. Co-opting elites from peripheral countries

Where would one expect to find experts bureaucrats, ambassadors, academics and politicians from the South who aim to improve the food situation in the Third World through food aid? In all likelihood these elites will be found in large numbers around the focal point of the international food aid regime, namely the WFP. These elites come to the WFP with great dreams of procuring enough food aid for the South. They come to the WFP, most likely, with radical (in terms of the orthodoxy) ideas and demands. Soon they realise that they might have to work from within the WFP to change the already existing institution to be more amenable to their needs, as nobody is going to fund the creation of a parallel agency. By working within the organisation, reform-minded actors soon find themselves in a stalemate as older conservative forces within the institution resist change. The only changes that result are incremental, not upsetting any party to any great extent. This is what Gramsci called a “passive revolution”, with a revolutionary outcome remaining impossible without structural shifts in the world economy (Cox, 1983:166).

Individuals entering an existing organisation are faced with a routine whereby the institution deals with its particular issue-area. In Foucauldian terms, this relative

¹² This point will be taken further in section 4.2.5.

defined and coherent sphere of social knowledge is known as a “discourse” (McHoul and Grace, 1993:31; Rabinow, 1991:9), the contextually set “implicit or explicit principles, norms and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations [within the institution] converge” (with apologies to Krasner, 1983a:2). Our understanding of reality is tainted by the seeming naturalness of the discourse subjugating other interpretations through its monopoly on the “truth”. Those who argue from outside the boundaries of the hegemonic discourse seem “unintelligible, mad, or at least beyond the pale of accepted argument” as other interpretations lack the legitimacy of the dominant discourse in the WFP (Keeley, 1990:91; also Boyne, 1991:54). A discourse constrains that which falls outside, and enables actions taking place within its fuzzy limits.

In terms of the discourse within the WFP, Foucauldian thought provides clues as to how new reform-minded employees are disciplined and normalised (i.e. turned into technocrats) through observation, recording and training; processes of comparison, differentiation, hierarchisation, homogenisation, exclusion and examination (Foucault, 1984:188-205; Johnston, 1991:160-163).

The limits to internal agency-driven change of the discourse of the WFP have been sketched. The discourse is more likely to be altered structurally “when either the balance of bargaining power or the perception of national interest (or both together) change among states who negotiate them” (Strange, 1983:345).

International organisation, as a creation and legitimising agent of the hegemonic order has already been noted. Apart from being structurally dependent, the WFP is also dependent on the hegemonic power(s) and its allies in a much more direct sense: With the exception of Argentina, all the major donors of food aid to the WFP, and under the FAC, are Northern states. The reliance of the WFP on the North for its lifeblood (food aid) circumscribes the organisation’s policies and actions. “Directed” food aid is an example of an even more direct subversion of WFP independence. The constraining influence on the actions of the WFP due to its dependence on the hegemonic power(s) and its allies for food aid has rendered the WFP to lead the life of a “problem-solving” agency (Cox, 1981:128). The WFP is fundamentally unable to sever its ties with the international donors of food aid, nor can it ignore its interests to any great extent. It is

within this inevitable problem-solving discourse of the WFP that the normalisation and technocratisation of elites from peripheral countries take place.

4.2.5. Absorbing counter-hegemonic ideas

Modifications in food aid policy can be construed as having the effect of absorbing potentially counter-hegemonic ideas. The institution of a minimum level of food aid at the 1967 FAC, albeit a very low floor, prevented absolute depletion of food aid during high price periods, given the counter-cyclical character of food aid. The 1974 World Food Conference indicated to the Third World that states from the North were concerned about their wellbeing. World hunger amidst surpluses and affluence could have become a counter-hegemonic rallying point, especially under the auspices of the New International Economic Order (NIEO). Promises to the contrary by the North, coupled with the availability of easy credit eased the demand for food aid. In the 1980s, the material base of the potentially counter-hegemonic NIEO was destroyed (Augelli and Murphy, 1993:134) and subsequent demands by the South were made from a weakened position.

Suggestions that food aid has become more “developmental” in recent years (Hopkins, 1992; Uvin, 1992) point to an ostensible willingness of the North to assist the South in growing economically, and so forth. The type of development pursued is of the hyperliberal variety that leaves dominant social groups the world over in an even stronger position to act in the global economy than it does others and removes the state from the economy. In terms of the current conception of “pathways to development”, blame and responsibility for economic failure lie within Third World countries themselves, with the world order and the major powers exonerated from any blame (Lee, 1995:154). At the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome, US Secretary of Agriculture confirmed Lee’s observation where he said that “[t]he developing world must change [their] national policies. The leaders of the developing world must be furthest out front. They *alone* (my emphasis) can enact the reforms necessary to pull their countries out of poverty and dependence. In a time of limited resources, the United States stands ready to help those nations that demonstrate the political will necessary to achieve food security (Glickman, 1998).

The “Washington consensus” narrows the parameters of possible economic solutions for Third World countries to within one developmental framework. It does not allow for alternative development strategies, but forces a hegemonic hyperliberal problem-solving approach onto Third World policy-makers. Hopkins (1992) traces the development of an epistemic community on food aid. He notes how the epistemic community has been able to ensure “incremental change” (Hopkins, 1992:264), away from what domestically based politicians might want of various national food aid policies. Although I would not dare to scorn these experts who form the epistemic community in the way someone like Noam Chomsky scorns “experts”, the members of the epistemic community are all hegemonic organic intellectuals to varying degrees. They are certainly well-meaning, and altruistically motivated individuals, but their problem-solving approach assists in legitimising prevailing power relations in the food aid regime. Their positions are also compromised in that many members of the epistemic community represent *status quo*-minded organisations with very specific interests and views on development, a view associated with structural adjustment and neo-liberal economics, such as USAID, the World Bank, the OECD and other international institutions. Hopkins (1992:239) also mentions the gradual demise of a “more critical, leftist [epistemic] community” which was quite powerful during the 1970s, and which could have served as the nexus of intellectuals around which a “critical” international conception of food aid could have been developed.

4.3. International organisational autonomy

We have examined the way in which an international organisation, such as the WFP, is constrained by the world order within which it is set, and how it serves to legitimate and support the hegemonic order. The survival of international institutions is constrained by their foundations in international civil society¹³. The more in conflict

¹³ Keeley (1990:96-97), in his application of Foucault’s ideas to regimes, asserts that “[s]uccessful regimes will be linked to significant networks and will suppress, absorb or marginalise their rivals for control of a set of actors”. The basis of power is to be found in the network of societal relations, demarcating a sphere of interaction and setting the “limits of the possible”.

with the prevailing hegemony an institution is, the more it needs to be underpinned by counter-hegemonic forces, which must originate in national settings.

“[O]nly a war of position can, in the long run, bring about structural changes, and a war of position involves building up a the socio-political base for change through the creation of new historic blocs. The national context remains the only place where an historic bloc can be founded, although world-economy and world-political conditions materially influence the prospects for such an enterprise” (Cox, 1983:173).

As has been mentioned briefly, the autonomy of the WFP, as an international organisation is also constrained in a much more direct manner. At the WFP, food aid receiving states initiate, formulate and present, sometimes with the assistance of the WFP, a project for which it requires funding. Funding is then provided by the donor members of the WFP (Talbot and Moyer, 1997:278). Thus, the independence of states that is required to develop a counter-hegemonic movement is constrained by the very reliance of recipient states on donor states (from the North) for food aid. An alternative, counter-hegemonic food aid institution is inconceivable, as the very lack of material resources (as revealed by food shortages in this case) would preclude the survival of such an institution.

However, international organisations are not puppets of the hegemonic order in which they are embedded, but assume some autonomy, that is, behaviour inconsistent with what one would perceive to be the (material) interests of transnational elites. Stated *raison d'être* of international organisation correspond with the material interests of the transnational elites to a lesser or greater degree.

An area where WFP behaviour varies from major donor interest is in the targeting of food aid. South and East Asia is a much more economically, politically and militarily important region to the major powers, than is Sub-Saharan Africa. The major powers have a history of involvement in both South and East Asia, particularly in building a bulwark against communism during the Cold War. At present, the interest of core states in that part of the world is predominantly of an economic nature. The channeling of food aid during 1997 (before the Asian financial crisis) indicates the different priorities of donors. The assumption is that multilateral food aid is motivated more by humanitarian concerns than bilateral food aid, the latter of which being easier to tie into the foreign policy objectives of the donor state. In 1997, Sub-Saharan Africa received 40% of all multilateral food aid, as opposed to the 34% that South and

East Asia received. Although the amounts received are close and not particularly meaningful as such, the contrast with bilateral food aid hints at motives other than altruism. During the same year, South and East Asia was the largest receiver of bilateral food aid (43%), versus the 27% received by Sub-Saharan Africa (WFP, 1998a). This suggests a greater concern with people's wellbeing on the part of the WFP, than on that of the US and the EU, the world's two largest donors. The stronger humanism focus of the WFP is consistent with the greater altruism found in the foreign policies of most middle powers, and their strong propensity to distribute food aid multilaterally.

The WFP is also the last resort provider of emergency food aid, whereas national aid agencies have attempted to resist the usurpation of their aid budgets by the demand for relief aid. While this resistance can be understood as national donors not wanting their longer term work at making the target population of their development work more self-sufficient, be undermined, their reluctance can also be understood as self-interested. "Development" aid plays a market development role, in the sense that it brings previously excluded people nearer to the world economy. Relief aid, on the other hand, goes to people who are unlikely to be integrated into the world economy. In other words, the short-term expense of relief aid offers hardly any hope for a return on the "investment" that had been made, whereas development aid does offer some return.

The constrained existence of the food aid regime and the WFP was sketched in this chapter. The inability of the WFP to gain much autonomy from core states, on more than one level, explains why the WFP has not been able to provide much leadership on food aid issues and making a larger dent in world hunger. We now turn to a state that has the ability to greatly contribute to solving many of the world's problems, including world hunger, but has chosen not to.

Chapter 5 - United States Food Aid Policy

5.1. Introduction

Of all the major food aid donors, supply side (surplus disposal) factors play the strongest role in the determining levels of food aid donated by the United States¹. United States foreign policy has always been notoriously self-interested, devoid of much of the humanitarian concern one finds in many European states, for example. Self-interested behaviour, with regards to food aid, is also the most explicit in American policies. However, the fact that the US has consistently been the largest food aid donor since World War II, along with its internationally powerful position have mitigated criticism against its self-interested behaviour. This has allowed the US considerably more freedom from external constraints, as opposed to those faced by middle power food aid donors.

In the mid-1960s, the United States provided more than 95% of total food aid, declining drastically as international grain markets tightened in the few years leading up to the world food crisis of 1974, when the American share of total cereal food aid was less than 40% (Hopkins, 1992:235; IGC, 1998a). Since the mid-1970s US food aid has consistently accounted for about 60% of total cereal food aid. Following the sharp rise in cereal prices, which started after 1993 and peaked in 1996, US food aid once more fell to around the 40%-mark in 1997, but steadied to 51% of total cereal food aid in 1998 (after world prices had dropped significantly) (WFP, 1998a, 1999c). The decline of the American share of total food aid is partly attributable to the more prominent role as a food aid donor assumed by the EU and its member states, even though this prominence has partly been the result of hegemonic pressure. The persistent large size of US food aid donations has made it hard for other states to criticise the US for self-interested behaviour and the dumping of agricultural surplus.

Despite only being “minimally hegemonic” (Cafruny, 1990:111-114), the US remains extremely powerful vis-à-vis other developed states, with these states often incurring

certain costs or shouldering burdens to the benefit of the US. This happens despite US interests having become more apparent and general system-wide gain less, in these days of minimal hegemony. While the US enjoys hegemonic power over others, it has more freedom from structural constraints and pressures from other states than any other state in the international system. Strange (1988:23-42) views this power as not necessarily relational, but structural, a highly fungible form of power. Neo-Gramscian theorists go even further, endowing American power with a normative “neutrality/objectivity”, in the sense that what the US wants seems only reasonable and for the benefit of everyone. Subordinated states internalise and unconsciously assist in the legitimation of the hegemonic order, as well as their own subjugation within it, much like women who prefer patriarchy to less repressive gender relations. Such a conception of power is even less reliant on coercion than Strange’s structural power. This understanding of deep-rooted and inconspicuous power does not preclude conflict or competition between the hegemon and other states, even its allies (Cafruny, 1990:104), but the challenge and the outcome is very much constrained by the “limits of the possible” (Gill, 1991:55), requiring very little direct pressure to be exerted to bring about favourable results for the US (Gill and Law, 1988:75).

The most important supply side factor, in the case of the US food aid, is the availability of agricultural surplus (as indicated by high commodity stock levels and a relatively low wheat price) to be donated or exported on concessional terms as food aid (Gilbert, 1996:146). In chapter 3 the relationship between stock and food aid levels was discussed, as well as the relationship between prices and food aid levels. Public Law 480 (PL480) of 1954 gave US food aid the legal basis in the form that has more or less persisted to this day (Shaw and Clay, 1993: 215). The explicit purpose of the PL 480 programme during the 1950s and 1960s was to dispose of agricultural surpluses, accompanied by the secondary concern that poor states/American allies could benefit from dumped agricultural surplus.

Through the decades, surpluses declined, and food aid was seized upon by various other groups (other than agricultural interests, that is) to advance American military,

¹ Gilbert (1996:146) identifies the budget deficit as another important determinant of food aid levels in the cases of the US and Canada.

political, commercial and humanitarian interests. Despite the proliferation of groups with an interest in food aid, the existence of a surplus to donate has always largely determined the US food aid levels. Food aid still serves as a way to dispose of/sell produce that cannot be sold at satisfactorily high market prices (surplus). The Uruguay Round has restricted the ability of the US to use food aid as a guise for subsidised sales. High international agricultural prices followed the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, negating the need for agricultural surplus disposal, with the result that US food aid, and its minimum international commitment under the Food Aid Convention of 1995, declined. Though much of the surplus that used to be sold through particularly Title I of the PL 480 programme, is now prohibited under the Uruguay Round, the US is still able to utilise various other agricultural export support programmes.

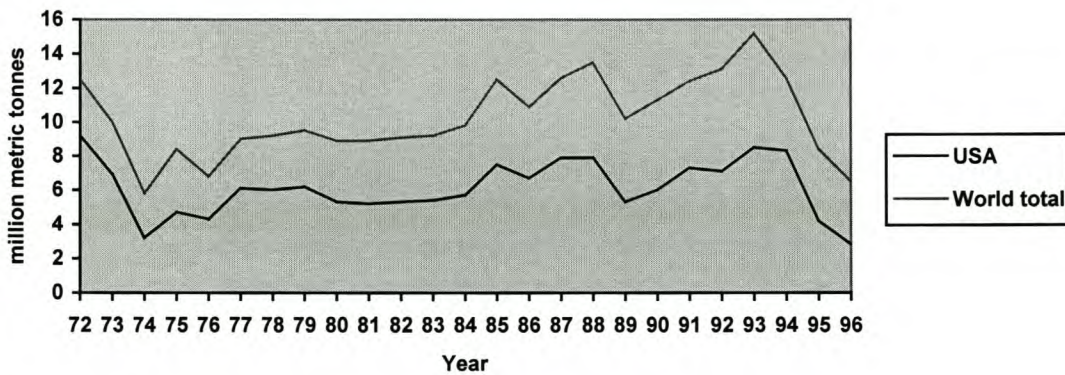
Under the Food Aid Convention (FAC) of 1986 the minimum US contribution to world food aid was to be 4,5 million tonnes. The FAC of 1995 reduced the minimum US commitment to 2,5m tonnes. Apart from a decreased commitment in absolute terms, which has always been achieved, the US share of total FAC minimum also decreased (the EU minimum commitment stayed constant at 1,8m tonnes). Other than a reduced *legal* commitment, the US has in recent years also provided a smaller proportion of actual world food aid. This reduction by the US is an important factor in explaining the overall decline in world food aid since 1993, even though the US is still the world's largest donor of food aid. Over the period 1993-96, the decline of US food aid amounted to two-thirds of the total decline of food aid over the period. Between 1993 and 1996, US food aid fell by almost 70%, whereas European food aid, for example, declined by around 40%. Thus, understanding *why* US food aid has decreased so drastically since 1993 will go a long way in explaining the general decline in world food aid levels since 1993.

Understanding the domestic interests and dynamics that propel US food aid is important because systemic factors place fewer constraints on US domestic policy and national interest-maximisation than in the case of middle powers². Hollis and Smith

² In the case of the US, the *state* in Hollis and Smith's (1990:8) system-state (system-US) dyad is more influential and explanatory in terms of system characteristics than in a system-middle power dyad.

(1990:7) argue that if state behaviour has any influence on the system in which it exists, one must explain state behaviour. Similarly, if bureaucratic behaviour has any influence on state behaviour, we must account for bureaucratic behaviour. The US, due to its hegemonic position, affects the international system more than does any other state, and the international system has less influence on it than on other states. The influence of the American state and the relative freedom it enjoys from systemic constraints accord American bureaucracies more influence, due to the influence of the state in which they are situated.

Figure 5.1. United States and world cereal food aid (1972-1996)



Source: USAID (1998)

One should not reify the state into a unitary, rational and coherent entity. The existence of various state-sectoral³ dyads (e.g. US state-Title I, US state-Food for Progress, etc.) explain why the ontological creation, “US food aid”, is not informed by a coherent logic and harbours contradictions. For example, of the two most important PL 480 food aid lines, Title I food aid has decreased drastically in recent years, whereas Title II has actually increased over the same period. However, both Title I and Title II are subsumed under the term “US food aid”. By treating the various food aid programmes as units of analysis, US food aid can be explained on a state level of analysis which is still sensitive to the somewhat divergent food aid programmes grouped together under the rubric of US food aid.

US food aid affects, and is affected by, the workings of various domestic agencies. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) identifies commodities and the quantities available for donation; the Treasury Department sets the terms of credit at which food aid sales are to take place; the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) establishes whether funding is available; the Department of State considers the political implications of food aid donations and the Agency for International Development puts the programmes to effect in the field. The Food Aid Subcommittee of the Development Co-ordinating Committee (DCC) rules on whatever interagency disputes may arise (Ruttan, 1996:149).

Prior to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act (also known as the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act) of 1985, food aid was largely additional to financial aid. The additionality of food aid to financial aid, though less, is still prevalent. Saran and Konandreas (1991:42) argue that on the short-term food aid is still clearly additional to financial aid, but they are inconclusive about whether substitution has increased over the longer term. It should also be noted that in states for which surplus disposal plays a role in food aid (usually the larger agricultural exporters), greater additionality occurs than when surplus disposal does not play much of a role in national food aid programmes.

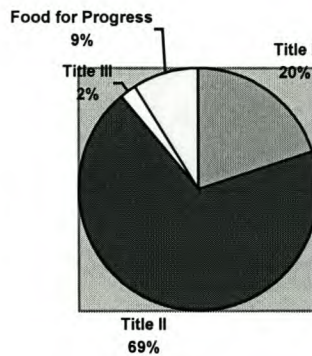
In the US, various agricultural committees and subcommittees of both Houses of Congress appropriate the respective food aid titles their share, administered by either the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (Title I) or by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Titles II and III). The use of at least two government departments (Agriculture and State) impairs co-ordination and allows for the additionality of US food aid. Whilst food aid is of less value to a donor than financial aid, the former type still inflates the general foreign affairs budget (150 account), exaggerated even more so by the over-stated value of food aid as recorded in the budget⁴. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act sought to reduce the freedom with which food aid was given out. The Act introduced a greater trade-off among food aid,

³ I prefer the use of *sectoral* instead of *bureaucratic* to describe the various food aid programmes and their connections with "US food aid".

⁴ See chapter 3 for a further explanation of the valuation of food aid.

financial aid and other aspects of the foreign assistance budget (Ruttan, 1996:178; Clay and Stokke, 1991:7).

Figure 5.2. United States Food Assistance Programmes (1998)



Source: USAID (1999e).

In the rest of the chapter the focus will fall mainly on Titles I and II of the PL480, as these two programmes accounted for 89% of US food aid in 1998 (USAID, 1999e). Two smaller programmes, Title III of the PL480 programme and the Food for Progress programme will also be considered briefly. The various purposes and benefits to both donor and recipients will be examined in brief, as well as trends demonstrated by the various Titles in recent years. From the outset it is important to note the different rationale behind Title I on the one hand, and Titles II (and Title III) on the other. Title I food aid should be associated with the “decline” of food aid, as it is funded by the USDA, has a strong surplus disposal function with direct and short-term material donor interests playing more of a role than in the case of Title II, which is funded by USAID and is more motivated by humanitarian concerns, and less by surplus disposal than Title I and should therefore be associated with the “growth” of food aid. Food for Progress food aid commodities are supplied from the surplus available to the Commodity Credit Corporation. The last section of this chapter deals with the relationship between US agriculture and the national food aid programme, as the US is regarded as the state in which the production of a surplus is a stronger determinant of food aid levels than any other state.

5.2. United States food aid programmes

5.2.1. Title I food aid

Title I food aid is a form of bilateral programme food aid, designed to sell surplus American agricultural commodities to friendly developing countries at below world market credit terms, without disrupting world (and US) agricultural markets unduly. Title I food aid accounted for more than 70% of US food aid during the period 1955-92 (Kodras, 1993:234), but has drastically shrunk since 1993.

The initial purpose of Title I food aid was to straightforwardly dispose of surplus agricultural commodities. However, Title I food aid soon came to serve US foreign policy objectives⁵, despite the fact that aggregate US food aid levels were not influenced by foreign policy goals, but by the availability of agricultural surplus. Congress curtailed the (ab)use of Title I credit sales for foreign policy ends in 1975 through the International Development and Food Assistance Act. The developmental/humanitarian aspect of food aid was enhanced through a regulation that stipulated that a maximum of 25% of Title I sales were to be allowed to countries above a certain per capita income level. A further development-minded reform was the prescription that 15 % of Title I commodities were to be given as a grant, with the monies generated to be used to the direct benefit of the poor (Shaw and Clay, 1993:216).

The easy credit terms of Title I sales provide balance of payment support to countries with foreign exchange shortages, as well as to countries that have trouble in meeting their food needs through commercial imports⁶ (Shaw and Clay, 1993:218). Particularly during the 1980s did the benefit of Title I come to the fore, both for the US and the recipients. The debt problems of many developing states started with the second oil price hike of 1979 and President Reagan's monetarist policies, after a

⁵ In 1974, 70% of Title I food aid went to South Vietnam, Cambodia and South Korea, for obvious (to the US government, that is) military reasons (Ruttan, 1996:170). See also Cathie (1997:65).

decade of great financial liquidity. Title I credit sales provided great relief to foreign exchange strapped poor countries, as it allowed these states to spend their money on other important items (in theory, at least).

Credit sales under Title I were of great benefit to the US as well, since the US had rapidly expanded agricultural production to meet the growing demand that prevailed during the 1970s, a decade of readily available loans and severe chronic food shortages (Puchala and Hopkins, 1983:79). US agricultural surpluses (and accompanying political and economic costs) skyrocketed, following the drastic collapse of effective demand and the emergence of the European Union as a major agricultural exporter. Since 1993, a relative shortage of supply of agricultural commodities, as indicated by high international agriculture prices, has lessened the need for food aid (especially Title I) as a means of surplus disposal. As the size of the Title I programme for a particular year is denoted in dollar (not tonnage) (Shaw and Clay, 1993:221), higher prices automatically reduce the quantity of agricultural commodities available for sale on credit through Title I. The budget format of Title I thus provides a built-in mechanism regulating between surplus and food aid levels

Title I credit sales affect normal marketing channels much more than does food aid delivered through non-market channels, such as emergency aid or food for work programmes, when the food aid goes straight to the needy. However, Title I food aid does not raise the food levels of a country, as it merely assists in financing imports that would have taken place in any case, except when the prices are below that of the market (Shaw and Clay, 1993:233). Programme food aid does displace commercial exports to some extent, which makes one wonder how the US escapes/escaped as its concessional sales are/were often in contravention of the FAO Principles of Surplus Disposal and Consultative Obligations.

The FAO established the Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSD) to prevent concessional sales from disrupting normal export patterns in agricultural trade, requiring food aid to be additional to normal commercial sales. Be that as it may, the

⁶ A 1989 study found that Title I credit sales do little to improve the overall level of nutrition in recipient states, as it merely provides balance of payment support in financing imports that would have taken place in any case (Shaw and Clay, 1993:225), as programme food aid typically does.

legal status of the FAO Principles is not clear as they are not a “binding instrument” on member states (Cohn, 1993:23). Singer and Shaw (1996:452) point out that much food “trade” is not conducted as straightforward market transactions, but rather through a “labyrinth” of various agreements between governments at various sub-market prices/credit rates. This opacity makes it “difficult, if not impossible, to quantify globally the concessional element of such transactions such as export credit, guarantee and enhancement programmes, and their linkages with other trade concessions, or with financial aid”, with obvious negative implications for the enforcement of the FAO Principles. This could explain why nobody pays much attention to the work of the CSD, nor to the rules supposed to ensure that food aid is additional to commercial exports (Uvin, 1992:305), leaving the CSD to perform a job of “doubtful effectiveness” (Singer, Wood and Jennings, 1987:197; Cathie, 1997:10).

Title I food aid falls under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mere fact that Title I is funded and administered by the USDA should give one a strong indication of the interests that underlie Title I food aid, as opposed to Titles II and III which are funded by USAID. Currency generated from Title I sales are kept as counterpart funds⁷ and are normally owned by either the US or the recipient government (Shaw and Clay, 1993:230). The US controls the use of counterpart funds, which are employed for agricultural and trade purposes, such as the promotion of business channels in recipient states (through marketing, credit provision and agribusiness) (Ruttan, 1996:177; Shaw and Clay, 1993:218)⁸. Under the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act of 1995/6, Title I is to become an even more effective market development instrument as private businesses, along with the governments of developing countries, are now granted soft loans, but their purchases are tied to American agricultural produce (Cohen, 1998).

⁷ “Counterpart funds refer to local (domestic) currency obtained from the sale by a government of commodities or foreign exchange received as aid, from a donor country or international organisation, and over whose use the donor has (or retains) some control” (Bruton and Hill (1991) in Maxwell and Owens (1991:4).

⁸ The influence of the US alone through counterpart funds is quite small, but the accumulation of counterpart funds from various donors is more consequential. Food aid counterpart funds in Mozambique amounted to 22% of government expenditure in the late 1980s (Maxwell and Owens, 1991:5).

Through the decades, recipients of Title I food aid have strongly reflected the overseas political and military interests of the US. In 1974, more than 70% of Title I credit sales went to South Vietnam, Cambodia and South Korea, with the generated funds being used to support the war effort. During the 1980s, Egypt became the largest recipient of (mostly US) food aid, in an attempt by Washington to assuage the Egyptians and their opposition to the “recently-created” Israel, but also because Egypt was deemed to be a potentially lucrative market to “develop”. In the midst of the African food crisis of the mid-1980s, Egypt was still receiving a disproportionately large share of world food aid considering that greater need for food aid existed elsewhere in Africa (Clay and Stokke, 1991:10; Shaw and Clay, 1993:223). Following the collapse of the Communist regimes of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the priority these countries enjoyed in US foreign policy became apparent in the large amounts of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and food aid they received⁹. Shifting US priorities can be appreciated by the fact that in the first five years of these former communist states receiving food aid, starting in 1989, 20% of world food aid was diverted from the rest of the developing world. This diversion can be attributed to the shift in countries prioritised by US food aid and foreign policy (many of the former Communist countries), but also the fact that there is little additionality to US food aid when new food aid priorities appear on the horizon (given the nominally fixed budgets of Title I programs). Most of the food aid to the former communist states was diverted from previous (US) food aid favourites (such as Egypt, El Salvador and Morocco) (Benson and Clay, 1998:39). In 1994, 30% of US food aid went to Eastern Europe, and only 23% went to Sub-Saharan Africa (Charlton, 1997:447).

During the period 1955-1992, Title I made up 70% of total US food aid, but by 1998, Title I accounted for only 20% of a very low US food aid total (see figure 5.2.) (Kodras, 1993:234; USAID, 1999e). US programme food aid (Title I) has fallen from \$442,8 (1991) to a budgeted amount of just \$112m in 1999. The recent decline in

⁹ During the period 1990-95, Official Development Assistance (ODA) fell by 15% in real terms. Without counting ODA to the former Communist states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, ODA declined by 19% in real terms during the same period. What this means is that ODA to the former Communist countries increased, or at a minimum, declined less severely than did ODA to the rest of the developing world. The former Communist countries received 4,8% of ODA in 1995 (Benson and Clay, 1998:32).

Title I food aid, should be considered in light of the fact that Title I food aid falls under the USDA budget. Why has this decline in Title I credit sales taken place? Taylor (1992:143) identifies programme food aid (which Title I is) as a grey area, in terms of whether it should be defined as food aid or subsidised sales of agricultural commodities. The variation of programme food aid agreements (the differing terms offered in these programme food aid transactions) makes generalisations hard, except to say that this form of aid is the most suspicious of all forms of food aid.

The Agreement on Agriculture included in the Uruguay Round of the Generalised Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) attempted to limit the misuse of food aid as a means of circumventing the restrictions on subsidised sales of agricultural commodities. Article 10(4) of the Agreement on Agriculture states that “Members donors of international food aid shall ensure that such aid shall be provided to the extent possible in fully grant form or on terms no less concessional than those provided for in Article IV of the Food Aid Convention 1986”¹⁰. The US is the only major food aid donor that does not give all its food aid in fully grant form, thereby enabling the US to recover part of the cost of its food aid programme (Shaw and Clay, 1993:222)¹¹. It seems as though the Uruguay Round GATT regulations have succeeded in preventing US circumvention of international limits on agricultural export support, and more specifically in the case of Title I, the credit sales of agricultural commodities.

The Uruguay Round has also made the use of Title I as a market development tool more difficult. Article 10(4) of the Agreement on Agriculture states that “Members donors of international food aid shall ensure that the provision of international food aid is not tied directly to commercial exports of agricultural products to recipient countries” and “that international food aid transactions, including bilateral food aid which is monetised, shall be carried out in accordance with the FAO Principles of

¹⁰ According to Article IV of the 1986 FAC, credit sales would require payment in reasonable instalments over a period of at least 20 years at interest rates below world commercial rates. A maximum of 15% of the principal cost is payable on delivery (Shaw and Singer, 1996:448). The FAIR Act of 1995/6 eliminates the minimum repayment period of 10 years set by the 1990 farm bill, the Agricultural Development and Trade Act and also shortens the maximum grace period from 7 (as set by the 1990 farm bill) to 5 years (Shaw and Clay, 1993:218; USAID, 1999c). The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD defines food aid as having a concessional element of at least 25%.

Surplus Disposal and Consultative Obligations". Previously, food aid might not have been explicitly tied with commercial exports, but it was a form of market development, however vague, indirect or fallible such a market development strategy may be¹². Market development refers to the improvement of infrastructure and distributional networks, altered consumer tastes, and so forth. It is hard to directly link such changes and "development" to food aid, but I would argue that, even though food aid, at a minimum, might have none of the aforementioned market development effects, food aid will not do any harm to a recipient country as a future target for exports during an absence of food aid. The Uruguay Round explicitly forbids the use of food aid as a market development tool, unless the terms of credit are concessional enough (have 25% concessionality in its terms of sale).

What then is the effect of the Uruguay Round on US food aid, and in particular Title I food aid? Forbidding the tying of food aid to commercial sales makes Title I food aid a less effective market development tool, with money being shifted within the USDA budget to other market development programmes. Positive market development results for the US is not guaranteed because, even though Title I food aid might develop foreign markets, the inability to tie food aid to commercial agricultural exports from the US leaves the door open for other exporters to take advantage of the market that has been developed by the US. US agricultural exporters are very competitive in most cereals, and thus the US will probably be able to capture much of the markets they have developed through outright competition, without food aid being tied to agricultural exports. Furthermore, it has been noted that the CSD has been

¹¹ For a while, during the early 1980s, Japan was the only other donor not to donate all its food aid in fully grant form.

¹² The usefulness of food aid as a tool for the development of agricultural markets is a rhetorical device often employed by the pro-food aid camp. These proponents of food aid point out that most recipients of food aid later become importers of agricultural exports from the food aid donating countries. Barrett (1998:569) views the market-development argument as empty. He points out that since 1955, 153 countries (out of an approximately 200) have received food aid through the PL480 programme. Many of these countries are now importers of US agricultural products. The claim made by the pro-food aid camp is hard to justify on the vague nature of the evidence, as well as the virtual absence of counterfactual examples. Increased per capita income of a population is probably a greater stimulant for demand for US agricultural exports (Uvin, 1992:298), as food aid often goes to those countries that can by definition not afford US agricultural exports. At best, food aid lobbies, invoking the national interest, can claim that food aid influences consumer tastes in recipient countries, for example, the growing consumption of wheat and bread in Sub-Saharan Africa in recent decades. The link between food aid and changing tastes are not very clear, as one can probably attribute some causal influence to factors such as advertising, colonial interference and urbanisation.

unable to implement FAO Principles perfectly. The implication of this is that food aid does displace agricultural imports from other countries, the Uruguay Round in spite.

The aforementioned restrictions placed on Title I go a fair way in explaining the downward trend in Title I budget allocations. The US is seemingly not alone in dealing with the restrictions that have been placed on its programme food aid, as programme food aid has declined globally from more than 70% of all food aid in the late 1970s, at least 80% of the total in the early 1980s, to below 40% of all forms of food aid in 1996 (Charlton, 1997:445; Barrett, 1998:570). The downward trend in programme food aid can also be discerned in the decline of bilateral food aid from 63% of all channels in 1991, 50% on 1995, and 39% in 1998 (Charlton, 1997:448; WFP, 1999c). Trends revealed by Title I food aid concur with the assessment of food aid as generally surplus driven.

5.2.2. Title II food aid

Title II food aid was, according to the PL480 of 1954, to be a programme through which no more than \$300m worth of food aid was to be donated to meet urgent humanitarian needs in developing countries. Title II was originally a programme of minor importance in the PL480, judging by the small budget appropriated to it. The importance of Title II food aid grew in significance vis-à-vis other US food aid lines in response to the food crises of the 1970s and 1980s. Judging by budgetary trends, Title II has, in recent years, become the largest programme under the rubric of American food aid, reaching more than 50 of the poorest states the world over. Notwithstanding that Title II food aid has increased, both in terms of tonnage and dollar value, Title II's proportional increase should be viewed against the drastic decline of Title I food aid, which used to dominate US food aid. The shift in importance between Title I and Title II is quite apparent if one considers that between 1955 and 1992 70% of US food aid went through Title I (Kodras, 1993:234). However, in 1998, Title II accounted for 69% of total US food aid and the amount

budgeted for Title II for the 1999 financial year is more than 7 times larger than the budget allocation for Title I for the same period ¹³ (USAID, 1999e).

The initial focus of Title II has shifted from providing food aid commodities as emergency grants, toward becoming a form of project aid that views development by means of food aid grants as its *raison d'être*. However, this shift has not precluded Title II from providing emergency food aid. The shift toward a more development oriented form of food aid was initiated by the 1975 food aid reforms, under the authority of Section 206, so that in the 1990s, approximately 25% of Title II grants have been for emergency purposes (Shaw and Clay, 1993:217-8). The Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act of 1996 allows for the transfer of up to 50% of Title III's resources to Title II. This has been done to prevent the development objectives of Title II being hampered should the demand for emergency food aid deplete its resources (Cohen, 1998)¹⁴.

The 1975 food aid reforms permitted the sale of Title II grants for local currency (monetisation). The funds generated from these sales were to be ploughed back into the recipient country for agricultural and development purposes (Shaw and Clay, 1993:217). The FAIR Act of 1996 raised the minimum required monetisation from 10% to 15%. The funds generated from these sales may now, along with the aforementioned uses, also be used to finance the activities of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and development projects. The FAIR Act also allows, for the first time, that monetised proceeds be used in another country, as long as it is in the same region (Cohen, 1998). Title IV, subtitled General Authorities and Requirements, prohibits these grants from restricting production or marketing in recipient countries, by using food aid in such a way as to cause injury to US producers in a competitive world market (the Bellmon amendment) (Ruttan, 1996:183). Monetisation of Title II food aid grants and the development it directly enables stand in contrast with the

¹³ The budget amount allocated for Title I for 1999 was \$112m (a decrease of more than 50% from the previous year when the allocation for Title I was \$245m). The amount allocated for Title II for 1999 was \$837m, the same amount as the year before, and a slightly up from 1997 (USAID, 1999e).

¹⁴ The Food Security Act of 1985 reintroduced Section 416 of the Agricultural Act of 1949 through which grain, oilseed and dairy products are to be donated under Title II. Although controlled by Title II, the costs of Section 416 are borne by the Commodity Credit Corporation, not the PL480 programme, and are therefore not seen as part of the International Affairs budget (150 account).

mildly depressive effects on local economies that Title I credit sales have. The proceeds from Title I sales are kept in counterpart funds, which are seldom used, which means that counterpart funds consist largely of money that has been withdrawn from the recipient economy, hence the mildly depressive effect.

Title II food aid, as a form of project food aid, is regarded as a particularly effective food aid programme. It is also the only PL480 food aid line that has survived the recent budget cuts. Title II disrupts commercial markets much less than does Title I, as Title II is given through non-commercial channels, going directly to those involved in specific projects, like food for work projects and targeting the poor directly. This stands in contrast to Title I which is a government-to-government transfer and serves as balance of payment support in the recipient state. As recipient states do not have to pay for the food aid (unlike Title I), Title II is largely additional to imported and locally produced food, and thus raises the domestic food supply, even though some substitution does occur, the CSD despite.

The benefits of Title II to the US are not as apparent as are those of Title I. Title II food aid is given as a grant, whereas Title I commodities are sold on easy terms of credit. Selling something is more self-interested than giving it away. Furthermore, the channels through which Title II food aid is given also tempers accusations of self-interested behaviour by the donor. Though some Title II food aid is granted on a government-to-government basis (which mostly only occurs in cases of emergency), most of Title II food aid is channeled through NGOs, co-operatives and the WFP. The 1985 farm bill, for example, ruled that around three quarters of Title II must go through multilateral channels (Ruttan, 1996:177)¹⁵. Food aid through multilateral and non-state channels diminishes the politicisation of food aid donations¹⁶, even though it does not leave the donor without influence. For example, the US undermines the (political) independence of the WFP, as the US must approve the provision of food aid commodities to WFP-assisted emergencies (through the International Emergency

Section 416 food aid donations are made directly from the surpluses available to the CCC. In 1988, more than 40 countries were receiving food aid through Section 416. (Ruttan, 1996:177).

¹⁵ During the period 1986-90 an average of 59% of Title II food aid went through NGOs, 24% through the WFP and 17% bilaterally (Shaw and Clay, 1993:223). In 1996, \$324m worth of Title II food aid out of a total of \$821m went through US NGOs (USAID, 1999a).

¹⁶ See for example Cathie (1982:2) and Kindleberger (1970:141).

Food Reserve - IEFER) on a case-by-case basis (Shaw and Clay, 1993:224). Donors can prevent certain countries from receiving food aid, or delaying the delivery thereof in two important ways. It might refuse the IEFER requests to draw from the resources it has donated, by insisting that its pledge be used for other specified emergencies. Another way of hampering the delivery of timely food aid to certain countries is by merely not heeding IEFER requests for emergency pledges. The US has been the biggest culprit in this politicisation of multilateral emergency food aid. This practice has impacted on the usual opponents of the US, namely Cuba, Libya, Syria and North Korea (Charlton, 1997:454-7; Shaw and Clay, 1993:224)¹⁷. USAID has sometimes sought to overcome the restrictions placed on it by the State Department (of which it forms part) by channeling aid through NGOs which are able to provide relief under less duress from the US government. This happened in Iraq in 1991, where humanitarian agencies were utilised by USAID to assist vulnerable groups, the same groups that were under threat from US economic sanctions imposed on Iraq in an attempt to effect a change in the domestic political order (Natsios, 1997:50)¹⁸. Self-interested behaviour by the US is also demonstrated in the 1985 farm bill which requires 75% of all US food aid to be shipped in US vessels, even though this leads to costs five times higher than if competition were allowed (Bovard, 1993:96; Saran and Konandreas, 1991:51). Project food aid does have some market development outcomes, and even though this is not necessarily the primary objective of such food aid, it does attempt to integrate excluded people into the world economy, an economy in which the USA is well positioned so as to exploit those more peripheral to it.

Since food aid is often utilised as a means of disposing of agricultural surpluses, food aid availability declines during times of greatest need. Shortage of supply (as reflected in higher world agricultural prices) negates the *raison d'être* of food aid, namely the surplus disposing incentive, which results in lower food aid levels. During the 1972-74 food crisis, as agricultural prices soared, the (opportunity) cost of donating food aid escalated in accordance. This resulted in drastic cuts to the Title II programme (Rothschild, 1993:91). To prevent the quantity of food aid being diminished as a

¹⁷ Sierra Leone and Liberia have also been affected by the unwillingness of donors to volunteer resources (Charlton, 1997:454-7; Shaw and Clay, 1993:224).

result of higher prices, as had happened in during the 1972-74 food crisis, minimum tonnage levels for Title II were introduced in 1975 (Shaw and Clay, 1993:217). The minimum tonnage for 1995 was set at 2,025m tonnes, with the 1999 level slightly higher at 2,2m tonnes. The government owned Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), which manages most of the US agricultural surplus, and is administered by the USDA, provides the Title II programme with most of its food aid requirements, which is paid for by the USAID (Shaw and Clay, 1993: 221,218). Title II has to compete other smaller food aid programmes run by the US, such as Section 416 and Food for Progress, which also draw their resources from Commodity Credit Corporation surplus. Yet, Title II food aid has survived the decline of food aid the world over since 1993, though quantities purchased with the same amount of dollars have differed somewhat after 1993. In 1991, Title II allocations of \$803,2m bought more than 3m tonnes of food aid, but in 1999, \$837m is expected to buy 2,2m tonnes.

Under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, the US Administration and Congress are both committed to reducing the US budget deficit. Food aid offers an attractive target for budget cuts, because of the immediate positive effect that appears in the budget, as food aid is a short-term expense spent during the year of allocation. High international agricultural prices have also reduced the incentive for food aid as a means of disposing of agricultural surplus, and have raised the opportunity cost of giving away a relatively scarce resource (at the moment). Notwithstanding the prevailing climate, Congress has prevented the Clinton Administration, which has been eyeing the PL480 as a tempting target for budget cuts (Cohen, 1998), from reducing the Title II budget. However, Titles I and III have borne most of the cuts in recent years. The survival of the Title II programme is largely due to the flattering view of it as an effective programme. Title II is also GATT legal, seemingly unlike much of Title I. Article 10(4) of the Agreement on Agriculture prefers the form in which Title II food aid is given: "Members donors of international food aid shall ensure that such aid shall be provided to the extent possible in fully grant form or on terms no less concessional than those provided for in Article IV of the Food Aid Convention 1986".

¹⁸ The booklet opens with a foreword from former US President George Bush, which casts some doubt on the proclaimed benevolence of the American government, brings the author's independence into question and makes one more likely to view the information provided as disinformation instead.

Maintaining the Title II line, even though it has been a costly programme during the 1990s due to high agricultural prices, could be seen as an attempt by the US to prevent an even greater depletion of its PL480 food aid programme, especially after the massive reductions in Title I food aid. After all, by maintaining Title II, total US *aid* expenditure is not increased, since Title II has to compete with other aid programmes within the USAID budget. The overall reduction of US food aid reflects poorly in international food aid statistics, as often little or no differentiation is made between the various US food aid lines. Be that as it may, the increase of Title II food aid is an increase in overall less surplus driven food aid, and should therefore be understood as part of the developmentalisation of food aid.

5.2.3. Title III food aid and Food for Progress

The Title III food aid line is a programme in decline and of decreasing importance. In 1991, food aid assistance to the value of \$276,7m (1,4m tonnes) was given through Title III (Clay and Shaw, 1993:218)¹⁹. As the decade progressed, budget allocations to Title III plummeted, so that in 1998, only \$30m (0,1m tonnes) was allocated to the Title III budget.

Title III food aid is a government-to-government grant programme. It is directed at the least developed countries of the world²⁰, of which four received Title III food aid in 1998 (USAID, 1999c). Title III commodities are obtained privately or from the CCC, and is administered and funded by the USAID (Ruttan, 1996:183). Funds generated from the sale of Title III commodities are used to improve food security in recipient countries. A greater integration of Title III food aid with other foreign assistance programmes is being worked towards. This greater integration is due to the influence of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act (Clay and Stokke, 1991:7). Apart from the influence of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, greater integration of Title III food aid also makes economic sense, especially during a time of high international agricultural prices, and by implication, limited surpluses do draw upon. The increased

¹⁹ The total tonnage donated in 1993 was 1,3m tonnes.

²⁰ To qualify for Title III food aid, a country must have a per capita income of less than \$610 per year (1991), or a significant proportion of the population must be malnourished (Shaw and Clay, 1993:218).

substitution of Title III food aid with other food aid programmes has lightened the burden on the USAID budget, especially since a degree of duplication exists between Titles II and III.

The creation of a free-standing (unrelated to the PL480) Food for Progress Act in 1985 provided the US with a food aid channel to support agricultural liberalisation and democratisation in countries with slightly higher per capita incomes than the usually poverty-stricken recipients of food aid (Shaw and Clay, 1993:217; Ruttan, 1996:182). Although some element of market development is probably present in all food aid, it is seldom as explicit as with Food for Progress. The US is aware of its comparative advantage in many agricultural export products, and uses the Food for Progress to export “agricultural commodities on credit terms, or on a grant basis, to support developing countries and countries that are emerging democracies and have made commitments to *introduce or expand free enterprise elements into their agricultural economies*” (my emphasis) (USDA, 1999a). In 1998, South Africa and the former “bread-basket” of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, were two of the largest recipients of Food for Progress food aid (USAID, 1999d). South Africa and the former breadbasket to the Soviet Union, Ukraine, are hardly two priority countries in terms of food aid needs. Yet, there is more disposable income and “effective” demand in South Africa and the Ukraine, than there is in a poorer country, which makes the two aforementioned countries attractive export markets for the US.

The support of democratisation in developing countries through the Food for Progress programme seems, at first glance, like yet another benevolent act from the centre of the “Free World” to assist in pushing “history to its end”. But, things are not always what they seem. After decades of supporting authoritarian governments in the Third World, in the mid-1980s the US switched to the promotion of democracy all over the world (except China, of course). The type of democracy promoted by the US is polyarchical democracy, whereby mass participation is confined to a choice between competing elites²¹. Polyarchy is the form of democracy that has attained discursive hegemony (Robinson, 1996b:624), but offering a more palatable political arrangement

²¹ Cox (1996:303) echoes Robinson’s views on the inequities that are sustained by liberal democracy, though he does not refer to the phenomenon whereby popular pressure for economic change is moved off the agenda as *polyarchy* specifically.

than authoritarianism, transfixing social inequalities and leaving elite material dominance in tact (Taylor, 1999:14). Polyarchy amounts to a form of consensual domination whereby social tensions are diffused through the procedural incorporation of counter-hegemonic forces. Polyarchy focuses intensively on the procedural charade of democracy, but hardly on the actual social and economic consequences of government, so that “[t]he notion that there may be a contradiction in terms between elite and class rule, in which wealth and power is monopolised by minorities, and democracy, a contradiction that would flow from the original Greek definition of power of the people, does not enter – by theoretical-definitional fiat – into the polyarchic definition” (Robinson, 1996b:626).

Food for Progress and the promotion of polyarchy have not become all pervasive in overall US food aid. In 1998, Food for Progress food aid accounted for only 9% of US food aid in value terms, and is capped through legislation at 0,5m tonnes (USDA, 1999a). It does however still offer a strong example of the sinister side of development, economic liberalisation and democratisation.

5.3. Trends in US agriculture

There are two important dimensions to the relationship between agriculture and food aid. The first involves the “sale”/disposal of agricultural produce through food aid, as regulated by the Uruguay Round of GATT. The second involves a somewhat deeper dynamic, namely the actual production of a surplus to be available for donation (dumping) as food aid. The first has already been considered. We now turn to the latter.

The relationships between agricultural surplus, price and food aid levels were noted in chapter 3. The purpose of this section is an examination of US agricultural production in the 1990s, with special reference to cereals, and how this capacity has evolved. The importance of grasping this better is to improve our understanding of the availability of food aid (which, in the case of the US depends greatly on the availability of an agricultural surplus). US food aid policy should be understood with reference to the evolution of US agricultural performance and policies over the last few decades.

US agricultural exports were in great demand during the 1970s. Relatively high prices due to a perceived shortage of supply (remember the “world food crisis” of 1972-4?), a weak dollar, weak international competition, free trade transgressions that were easily forgiven in the context of the Cold War, and vast and easily available credit for food importing developing countries all stimulated US agricultural production, and made domestic support somewhat redundant (Mahler, 1991:37).

Things changed in the 1980s. In response to the production stimulating conditions of the 1970s, US farmers expanded production, but their exports were met with stern competition from the highly subsidised exports from the EU, which became a net exporter of agricultural commodities in the early 1980s. Demand for US exports was further stunted by a strong dollar and the unfolding world debt crisis, both factors partly the result of the high US interest rates that followed President Reagan’s reaction to the second oil shock of 1979. Furthermore, agricultural exports to Japan stabilised²². The US was stuck with huge agricultural surpluses. The demand for assistance from US farmers made agriculture the fastest increasing budget item in the US, despite “significant” unilateral cuts to domestic support courtesy of the 1985 farm bill (Paarlberg, 1997:419; Mahler, 1991:143)²³. In an attempt to offset EU subsidies to third country markets, the US introduced their own export assistance programmes, for example, the Export Enhancement Programme (EEP). Combined action of the US and EU resulted in huge quantities of agricultural commodities being dumped on world markets during the 1980s (McMichael, 1996:641), negatively affecting developing country agricultural production and export earnings. The increased competitiveness brought to bear by the EEPs was easily and more cheaply countered by the EU, resulting in the US failing to take market share away from the EU (Paarlberg, 1997:424; Cohn, 1993:31).

For the US, more so than the EU, the rising costs of agricultural assistance was becoming untenable. Reagan initially proposed a simultaneous liberalisation of all

²² Once a the population reaches a certain level of income, as happened in Japan, the population’s demand for food does not increase greatly, due to the low price elasticity of demand for basic commodities such as food (Mohr and Fourie, 1996:262-3).

national agricultural sectors, but the EU resisted (Yigletu, 1997:109). The EU and the US accused each other of forcing the other to use export subsidies. It would therefore have required a great deal of good faith/naiveté for one of the two parties to unilaterally liberalise its agricultural sector. The problem was to ensure simultaneous liberalisation. The Uruguay Round of the GATT offered the ideal forum in which to solve this problem (Gardner, 1996:95). The intolerable expense of agricultural support programmes, and the belief that it would enjoy a comparative advantage in a liberalised agricultural trading order (McMichael, 1993:199), prompted the US to include Agriculture in the Uruguay Round and induce the acceptance of its inclusion on others (Gill and Law, 1988:346).

The initial proposal of the US to the Uruguay Round was the “zero option” through which the US wanted to put an end to all agricultural support, protection and export subsidisation the world over within ten years. The call fell on deaf European ears (Gardner, 1996:95). The American plea for free trade should, despite the rhetoric, not be seen as the final acceptance by the US of the logic of the free market (even in agriculture), even though the prevailing “neoliberal consensus” accommodates the expediency and “legitimacy” of such rhetoric. The American position should rather be viewed as a neo-mercantilist strategy by which the US sought to take advantage of the comparative advantage it believed it enjoyed in international agriculture, an advantage that will be enhanced under a system of free trade (Mahler, 1991:45). The mercantilist expediency of the US position is evident in the fact that the USDA favoured free trade in sectors where the US had a comparative advantage²⁴, but sought protection for those sectors that were not deemed internationally competitive (such as tobacco, livestock, sugar, dairy and vegetables) (Grant, 1993:254; Palmetier, 1989:47).

²³ The annual cost of farm programmes rose by more or less five times in real terms in the period 1980-86 (Paarlberg, 1997:419).

²⁴ A Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (1995c:65) study predicted that North American countries would see a net increase in exports of around 50% as a result of the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture, gaining through the export of products such as *cereals*, fats and oils, meat and milk. According to 1991/2-1995/6 averages, the US is the largest exporter of wheat (34,2m tonnes), followed by Canada (20,7m tonnes) and the EU (19,7). The US is also the largest exporter of coarse grains, with 52,2m tonnes, followed by the EU (8,3m tons). Maize/corn, of which the US has a 72% world share (USDA, 1999b), makes up more than 60 % of the international coarse grains trade (IGC, 1998b).

During the negotiation of the Uruguay Round, the US unilaterally reformed its agricultural sector, not so much in anticipation of GATT discipline, but due to budget pressure (Paarlberg, 1997:429; Moyer and Josling, 1990:163). The US was, at the time, licking its lips at increased export opportunities, following a decrease in EU export subsidies according to GATT regulations (Ingersent, Rayner and Hine, 1995:1724; Gardner, 1996:99; McMichael, 1993:206).

The US stance during the agricultural negotiations in the Uruguay Round exhibited self-confidence in its ability to be highly competitive in a liberalised agricultural trade system. The US attitude explains the umbrage with which it accepted the limited liberalisation stipulated by the Agreement on Agriculture in 1993²⁵.

The first farm bill after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act of 1995/6, continues to evince an attitude and vision of US pre-eminence in global agricultural trade. The 1995/6 FAIR Act “decoupled”²⁶ support from agricultural price levels and ended acreage reduction programmes²⁷ in order to encourage full production (Paarlberg and Orden, 1996:1306; Ingco, Mitchell and McCalla, 1996:19). The lifting of restrictions on full production reveals two assumptions underlying the US attitude to international agricultural trade: Firstly, the US expects agricultural prices to remain high until the end of the decade (Stuart and Runge, 1997:130), and secondly, that it will be (one of) the dominant exporters in a free agricultural trading system.

²⁵ Although not significant in a quantitative sense (except perhaps with regard to restrictions on export subsidies), in a qualitative sense the Uruguay Round did lay a foundation for easier agricultural liberalisation in future trade rounds. The most significant outcome of the Agreement on Agriculture was the 36% reduction on export subsidies, which would allow for more open competition in the third country markets. Judging by the recent sanctions threatened and imposed by the US against the EU, following the trade dispute that ignited over bananas, an unremitting US position on freer agricultural trade can be expected in the next round of world trade negotiations, as it will seek to further benefit from its competitive agricultural exports.

²⁶ “Coupled” payments to farmers make up the difference between the target price, set by the government, and the actual market price, which used to be the lower of the two prices during times of excess supply, such as during the 1980s and early 1990s (Paarlberg and Orden, 1996:1306).

²⁷ During the period 1985-95 the US idled 18,2 % of its grain cropland (Ingco, Mitchell and McCalla, 1996:5)

5.4. Conclusion

What is the implication of all the above for food aid? Generally, to speak of food aid as surplus disposal is a travesty during favourable market conditions for exporters, along with the dominant international position the US has to take advantage of the opportunities presented by these favourable market conditions. If one accepts the argument that food aid is largely a means of surplus disposal, then the decline of US Title I food aid is understandable, given the wonderful export opportunities for agricultural commodities that have presented themselves since 1993.

The future of food aid as a means of surplus disposal looks bleak. US posturing during the banana trade conflict with the EU looks like the introduction, insistence and assertion of much freer trade in agriculture and US dominance, based on its comparative advantage, within such a trade regime, regardless of the needs of poor countries²⁸. The US would not assume such an extreme position if it did not expect high prices and its market dominance to continue. For wheat, the US committed itself to a 36% decrease in protection following the Uruguay Round, even though wheat had fairly little protection prior to the Uruguay Round, in any case (Ingco, 1995:50). Market share does not change as rapidly as do prices, so therefore one would expect the first variable to affect US food aid levels to be a drop in prices (not decreased market share). However, the “destruction” of competitors have made agricultural markets more oligopolistic, and thus less perfect²⁹, giving the US tremendous influence on world cereal prices (George, 1982:40; Watkins, 1996:245). Cargill, a large North American agricultural multinational company, supplies in excess of 60% of the world cereal market (Kronick, 1996:291). World agricultural markets are therefore more amenable to US influence, giving the US more control over the market aspects such as supply and price.

²⁸ The needs of poor countries are, ostensibly, what the banana-trade conflict between the US and the EU is about. The EU wants to give preferential access to certain Caribbean countries (part of the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific group) as bananas are the only product these island states can grow and subsequently export, and the US insists that free trade principles embodied by the WTO, be upheld. The US already controls 75% of the banana market in the EU. See also note 25.

²⁹ The more perfect a market, the less the influence one actor has on the market.

All is not lost. The decoupling of agricultural support after the FAIR Act and the encouragement of full production in the US will probably result in a glut in agricultural markets, a typical “bust” following the “boom” of recent years. At the end of 1998, world wheat prices had fallen to its lowest level in ten years, despite world consumption of wheat approaching record highs (*World Grain*, 1998), already resulting in a rise in food aid for 1998 (WFP, 1999f).

Although US food aid has declined drastically since 1993, Title II food aid has remained fairly constant. This seems to be in line with the developmentalisation of food aid, as Title II is largely driven by more altruistic concerns, as opposed to the surplus disposal motives of Title I. This developmentalisation is to be expected judging by the budget out of which it is funded. As with other states, this developmentalisation is not huge, in the case of the US one can count on approximately 2m tonnes of annual food aid being given through Title II. Although useful, it is nowhere near the 8,5m tonnes of cereal food aid that the US donated in 1993, in the days when Title I was still a major food aid line within the PL480.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1. Overview

International food aid remains by and large a form of agricultural surplus disposal. Consequently, food aid declined to its lowest level in more than two decades when cereal prices reached record heights in 1996. This decline in food aid was all the more pronounced considering that in 1993 food aid had reached its highest level since the 1960s. However, despite the record heights attained by cereal prices in 1996, food aid did not disappear entirely. The total disappearance of post-1993 food aid was prevented by the developmentalisation of food aid, or as the title suggests, the “growth” of food aid. This thesis attempted to understand food aid after 1993 in terms of these two paradoxical, but parallel trends, namely the “growth” and “decline” of food aid, albeit that these trends are not equal in size.

The *decline* of food aid occurred because agricultural surplus availability remains the most important factor that determines food aid levels. The need to dump surplus as food aid (which largely disappeared in the years following 1993) does not play the same role for all states, but it plays the strongest role of all states for the largest donor and most powerful state in the world, the United States. In the period 1993-96, US food aid showed a greater decline, both in absolute and relative terms, than any of the other major donors.

Regimes have been theorised as developing in accordance with, and as a result of initial hegemonic self-interest. The food aid regime originated with the United States. Gradually, the US drew other, weaker states (middle powers) into the food aid regime. These weaker states soon acquiesced to US power and accepted the hypocritical normative justification of the food aid regime. However, when cereal prices started rising after 1993, the usual American reason for donating food aid (i.e. to get rid of agricultural surplus) started dissipating and the US began to withdraw from the regime. As prices continued to rise, food aid became intolerably expensive. Donating large amounts of food aid was no longer in the direct and short-term self-interest of the hegemon. As a result, US food aid declined by almost 70% (1993-96). The US also reneged on its commitment under the FAC of 1995, and reduced its commitment

by almost 50% under the FAC of 1997. The food aid regime was not totally destroyed, as we will see when we consider the "growth" of food aid below. But first, why has the food aid regime had so little success in getting the US to negate much of its short-term self-interest and consequently disconnect its food aid from surplus availability?

The US's freedom from structural constraints in general, and from the food aid regime more specifically, has been approached from the neo-Gramscian perspective. Given that the US is the most powerful state in the world, along with the neo-Gramscian "solution" to the agent-structure problem, the US is viewed as having more freedom and enjoying greater benefits from structural conditions than any other state. Such freedom allows the US to be more able and successful in pursuing and satisfying its national interests, without much fear of effective opposition/retaliation from external forces. Of course, the point is not that structural conditions are so overbearing for middle powers that they are entirely unable to pursue their immediate self-interest (i.e. reduce food aid donations when agricultural prices rise); but rather that they are less able to do so compared to the hegemon. But there are also other reasons why, after 1993, middle powers did not reduce their food aid contributions to the same extent than did the hegemon, to which we will return below.

The tremendous influence of the United States on food aid matters and levels necessitated a more refined analysis, an analysis that moved beyond viewing the hegemon in unitary terms, especially if we wanted to more accurately identify the location of, and the reasons for the post-1993 "decline" of food aid. Subsequently, we were able to account for the divergent tendencies of the various food aid lines that fall under the rubric of "US food aid". The two major US food aid lines, Title I and Title II of the Public Law 480 of 1954, illustrate the divergences within US food aid distinctly: Title I food aid is administered by the USDA, and is notorious for its surplus disposing logic. Consider that between 1955 and 1992, Title I accounted for 70% of an already high US food aid aggregate. By 1998, Title I food aid had fallen to only 20% of an already very low US food aid aggregate. On the other hand, Title II, administered by USAID, has grown to account for 69% for US food aid in 1998, with the budget allocation for 1999 being seven times the size of that allocated to Title I (USAID, 1999e).

The *growth* of food aid is largely the result of the food aid regime that developed out of initial American self-interest. When cereal prices started to rise in the late 1960s, the US drew other states (middle powers) into the food aid regime, so as to share the food aid burden. To a much greater extent than the hegemon, these middle powers have accepted, and continued to abide by the norms of the food aid regime, whereby food aid should be disconnected from agricultural surplus.

Middle powers are supportive of the hegemon (on a fundamental level) and the hegemonic order as a whole, as this is the arrangement whereby they benefit most, given their limited capabilities. In order to preserve the status quo in the global political economy, middle powers attempt to moderate tensions, (food) aid being a typical way of assuaging such stress. Middle power altruism is not solely the result of their position in the hegemonic order, but also due to prevalent societal values (which are often strongly social-democratic) and the constrained existence of middle power foreign policy leaders. Supporting the process of international organisation is another important way in which middle powers seek to manage conflict and exert some influence in the international system.

International organisation, as an institution within a broader regime, serve to legitimise, support and perpetuate the hegemonic order, whilst not addressing root causes of injustice, inequality, and so forth. In the food aid regime international organisations facilitate the rules that support hegemonic expansion (e.g. accepting liberalised trade as a solution to world hunger) and co-opt counter-hegemonic elites and ideas.

The behaviour of middle powers and the development of international organisation and the food aid regime have provided continuity and consistency to food aid donations, albeit at a low level of around 5m tonnes per year. Although the initial normative justification (provided by the United States) whereby the middle powers were drawn into the food aid regime was hypocritical, these norms have become greatly accepted, with states contributing to the food aid regime out of their own volition. The power of the US is no longer needed to "enforce" the norms according to which the food aid regime functions. Gradually, through the role of middle powers

and multilateralisation, food aid is being disconnected from its dependence on the availability of agricultural surplus (which has been termed the "developmentalisation" of food aid). But, as we have seen, the hegemon (and most important food aid donor) plays according to different rules than do less powerful states.

Before we proceed to assess the prospects of future food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa, I would like to point out some of the weaknesses of this (field of) study, especially for those interested in further work in the cross-section of food aid and International Relations.

6.2. Weakness of this study and avenues for further research

Firstly, the (traditional) middle power concept is applied too crudely and basically signifies any developed state other than the hegemon. This crude contrast was originally drawn to distinguish the US and the freedom it enjoys from other states that are much more restricted and influenced by the structures shaped through American behaviour. The fact of the matter is that there is a huge gap between the United States and other states, whether it be in terms of relational or structural power, and as a result a whole different set of rules apply to the US. However, middle powers are not all equally constrained/influenced by hegemonic pressure. This variation is largely undeveloped in this study. Future scholars would do well to hierarchise states according to the hegemonically moulded constraining and enabling factors that affect their international behaviour. This does not just apply to middle powers with regard to food aid, but to most aspects of the international life of states.

Secondly, and keeping with the topic of middle powers: A finer distinction between middle powers that are major agricultural producers and those that are not should be made. We have established that agricultural surplus disposal plays a role in the food aid donations of major agricultural exporting middle powers, such as Canada and Australia. But, more clarity is needed on how much of their food aid is surplus disposal and how much is aid.

Thirdly, the serious shortage of literature on all aspects of food aid from states other than the United States indicates a fertile area for research. I am specifically referring to European food aid, as it has increased in importance in recent years, especially given the gradual withdrawal of the US from the food aid regime.

Fourthly, bureaucratic food aid politics was hardly touched upon in this study, except for the chapter on US food aid policy. This is understandable given the macro-level of this study, but even so, in the literature there exists very little on the bureaucratic decision-making procedures and agency/departmental politics with regard to food aid¹. In the case of the US, more work on the opposing forces of self-interest (surplus-driven food aid) and altruism (non-surplus driven food aid) is needed, so as to help us to better understand the contradictory tendencies of US food aid policy.

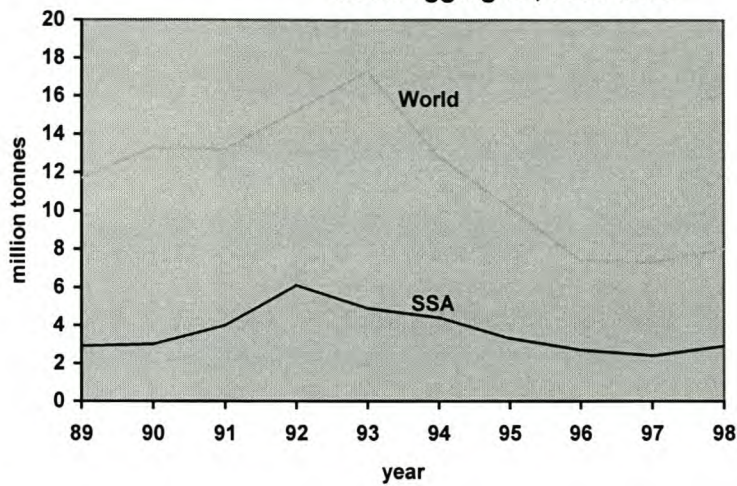
Finally, in this study, because of the macro-scope of this study, the links between (non-) surplus driven food aid and the various types, donors and channels were not always very direct. In a study of more limited range, these connections can be drawn more directly and indicated more clearly. But let us return, to the final issue dealt with in this study, namely the future of food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa:

6.3. The future of food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa

In the first chapter we identified three ways whereby the population of a state can acquire the food it needs to survive, namely by producing it themselves, importing it or receiving it as a donation (food aid). The dismal prospects for the first two of these strategies for improving food security in Sub-Saharan Africa were sketched in the same chapter. What are the prospects of the third strategy (food aid) for acquiring food, with regard to the region of Sub-Saharan Africa?

¹ The partial exception is Ruttan (1996), who traces the institutional history of food aid in the United States.

Figure 6.1. Food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa, in comparison to the world aggregate, 1989-1998



Source: USAID (1998); WFP (1999d; 1999f).

Judging by figure 6.1, food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa has oscillated pretty much in accordance with the trends in overall world food aid. The share of food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa has also hovered around the 40%-mark (WFP, 1998d). What this tells us is that Sub-Saharan Africa is not receiving growing attention by the food aid donors, and should expect increases in food aid only when total world food aid increases.

Financial aid can be utilised to buy food, and thereby serve the same purpose as food aid (for the recipient). Figure 3.2 indicated the decline of foreign aid (ODA) since 1992. Aid from DAC countries to Least Developed Countries have also as a share of total ODA, from 28% in 1987 (0,09% of DAC members' GDP) to 23% in 1997 (0,05% of DAC members' GDP) (OECD, 2000a). ODA to Sub-Saharan Africa has increased since the mid-1980s, but this increase is relatively less than the increases in ODA to parts of the world like North Africa and the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean (OECD, 2000c). Therefore, these trends do not augur well for the improved food availability in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Furthermore, the largest donor of food aid, the United States, is withdrawing from the food aid regime (except when agricultural prices are low and it needs to get rid of it surplus). American withdrawal can be attributed to federal budget pressure, the

inability of the food aid regime to prevent its high degree of self-interested behaviour, and also, as has been argued, to its increasing market share in many cereals and growing agricultural competitiveness². Increasing market control allows for easier price manipulation in these relatively imperfect cereal markets. The same dominance also suggests a preference for a (more) open agricultural trade regime so as to capitalise on one's competitiveness. With the Seattle Round having only recently got underway as this is being written, commentators³ have identified agriculture as one area where the US will be insistent on much greater liberalisation than that which was achieved during the Uruguay Round. The American preference for a greater liberalisation of agricultural trade during the Seattle Round of international trade negotiations can be traced back to more than a decade ago. Think, for example, of the "zero option"⁴ advocated by the US at the start of the Uruguay Round. Think of the 1995/6 US farm bill's lifting of all production restricting regulations. And think of the recent spat the US had with the EU, during the so-called "banana war"⁵, during which the US insisted on the upholding of free trade principles in agriculture.

The signs are ominous for Sub-Saharan Africa. Aid on the whole is declining. It seems increasingly that whatever food Sub-Saharan Africa will get from the US, as the breadbasket of the world, will be in the form of imports, not food aid (that is, if Sub-Saharan Africa has the ability to pay). Luckily, there are uncontrollable factors (e.g. the weather) that influence agricultural production, and subsequently agricultural markets are characterised by booms and busts. In 1998, food aid levels increased, following the sharp decline of cereal prices after the record highs of 1996 which had spawned demand-driven production increases. Therefore, apart from reliance on the ebb and flow of cereal prices, the developmentalisation of food aid just does not seem significant enough to make the huge impact required on the hunger ravaged African continent

² See also notes 24 and 25, chapter 5.

³ See, for example, Atkinson (1999) and Watkins (1999)

⁴ The "zero option" was a position whereby the US wanted all agricultural support to end.

⁵ See also note 28, chapter 5.

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