

Lecture Outline: Food & Health in the Global Context

Section 1: An Overview:

- **Statistics & Geographies of Hunger**
- **Why is food a health issue?**

Section 2: case studies of Bangladesh & Cuba

- **Colonial background**
- **Floods, famine & fame**
- **Food security & entitlement relations**
- **Cuba - Foundation for Nature & Man**

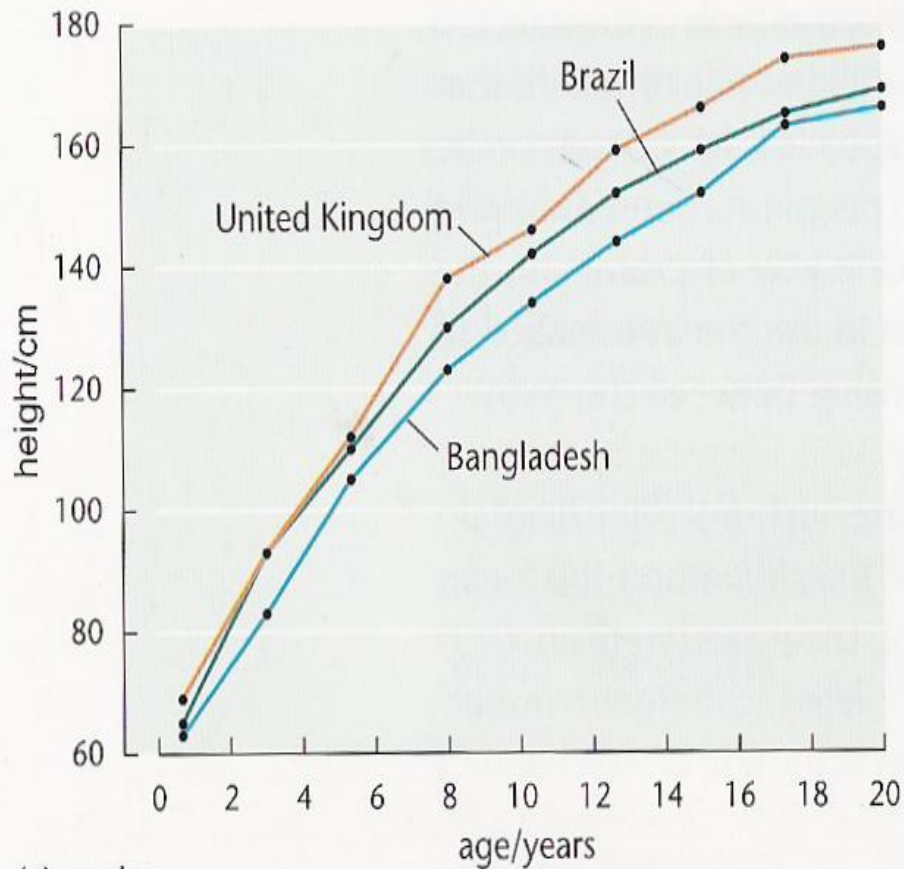
Section 3: What is Global about Hunger?

- **The politics of aid**
- **Global food markets**
- **Global food in the 21st century**

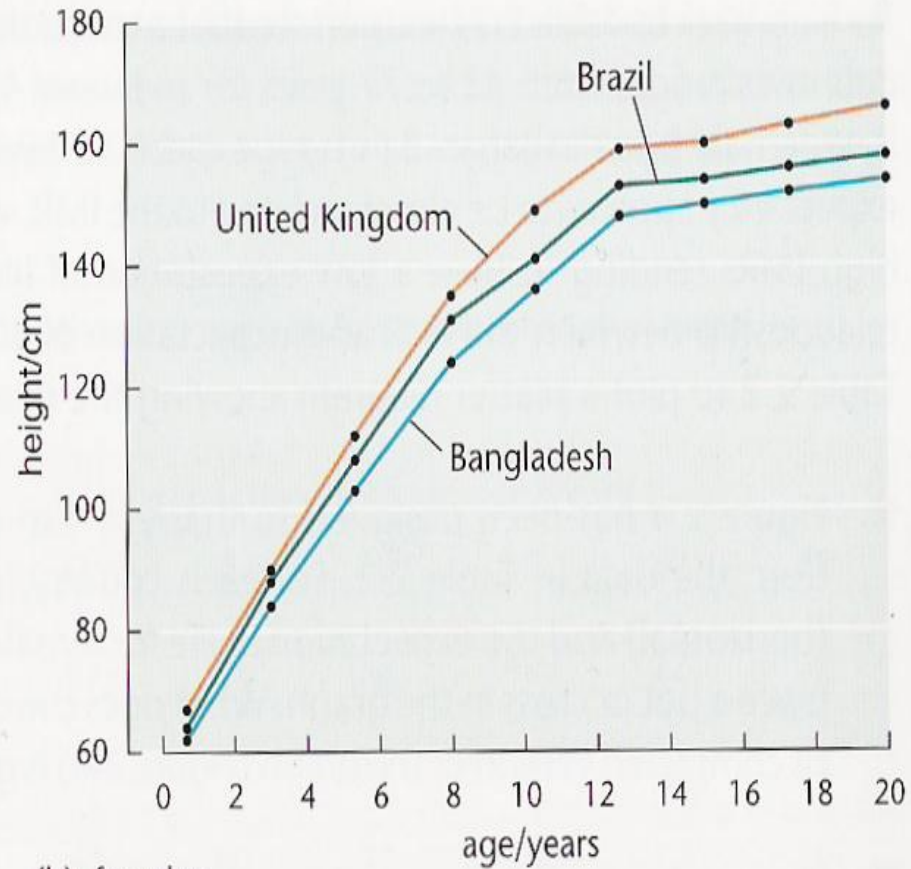
Global Hunger: Statistics & Geographies

- **1/2 world population malnourished**
- **1.2 billion+ hungry**
- **1.2 billion eat too much**
- **global epi-centres of hunger = South Asia, Africa & China**
- **80% of hungry poor - rural**

Why is food a health issue?



(a) males



(b) females

Figure 2.5 Height-for-age measurements in the United Kingdom, Brazil and Bangladesh, 1987. (Data from James, W. P. T. and Schofield, C. (1990) *Human Energy Requirements: a Manual for Planners and Nutritionists*, Oxford Medical Publications, Oxford)

Why is food a health issue?

- poor eyesight & blindness from lack of vitamin A**
- weak bone formation from deficiency in vitamin D**
- increased vulnerability to illness**
- critical periods: last stages intra-uterine & first 2 years of life**

It is not being small that matters, it is becoming small that is critically important. A mix of environmental forces leads to growth failure that also has consequences in other aspects of development. The real objective is not to make people bigger.

George Beaton, Canadian Nutritionist

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**Insert MAP OF BANGLADESH
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A case study of Bangladesh: background

- British colonial rule to 1947, independent state of Bangladesh created 1971
- extensive river deltas & low-lying land
- most densely populated country in world - 860 people per square kilometer

A case study of Bangladesh: background

- **one of the least industrialized & urbanized Asian countries**
- **1/2+ rural landless population**
- **growing urban migration**
- **health issues – TB, Malaria, HIV/AIDS**

Floods, famine & fame

- **1974 – Bangladesh flood & famine**
- **estimated 26,000 - 1.5 million deaths**
- **ex-Beatle George Harrison organized Bangladesh Concert**

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 1970 | cyclone, 300,000+ deaths (people swept away from coastal islands) |
| 1974-75 | major famine |
| 1978 | drought |
| 1979 | near famine |
| 1982 | drought & rural unemployment |
| 1984 | flooding & heavy loss of rice crops |
| 1987 | floods, 1,657 deaths, loss of 1.5 million tons of rice |
| 1988 | worse floods, 2,400 deaths |
| 1991 | cyclonic flooding of coastal areas, 140,000 deaths |
| 1996 | serious floods |
| 1997 | serious floods |
| 1998 | most extensive floods of 20th century, 34,000 square miles flooded, 23 million homeless, 1,000+ deaths |

From the windows of buses and the decks of ferry boats, we looked over a lush green landscape. Rice paddies carpeted the earth and gigantic squash vines climbed over the roofs of the village houses. The rich soil, the plentiful water and the hot humid climate made us feel as if we had entered a natural greenhouse. In autumn, as the ripening rice turned gold, we understood why in song and verse the Bengalis call their land ‘golden Bengal.’

Hartman and Boyce, 1983

Food Security: a country or household's ability to have a stable & reliable access to the food it needs through a mixture of production, trade, purchase or barter.

| | |
|----------------|--|
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The politics of food

Selected countries where over one in five are undernourished

| Country | Millions of Undernourished 2001-03 | % of Population Undernourished | Available Calories Per Person |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Armenia | 0.9 | 29 | 2260 |
| Bolivia | 2.0 | 23 | 2220 |
| Ethiopia | 31.5 | 46 | 1860 |
| India | 212.0 | 20 | 2440 |
| Senegal | 2.2 | 23 | 2310 |
| Thailand | 13.4 | 21 | 2410 |
| Yemen | 7.1 | 37 | 2020 |

Cuba: Foundation for Man & Nature

Entitlement Relations: the system which governs who 'commands' food, i.e. whether or not people can get access to food.

Table 7.8 Availability of food-grains in Bangladesh, 1967–76, compared with availability in 1967 (given an index value = 100).

| Year | Grain availability per day/ounces per person | Index (1967 = 100) |
|------|--|--------------------|
| 1967 | 15.0 | 100 |
| 1968 | 15.7 | 105 |
| 1969 | 16.6 | 111 |
| 1970 | 17.1 | 114 |
| 1971 | 14.9 | 99 |
| 1972 | 15.3 | 102 |
| 1973 | 15.3 | 102 |
| 1974 | 15.9 | 106 |
| 1975 | 14.9 | 99 |
| 1976 | 14.8 | 99 |

What is Global about Hunger?

The Politics of Aid

- **1,300+ NGOs & total US\$300 million aid/yr to Bangladesh**
- **trade with aid & creating dependency**
- **mega-projects vs basic health care & health education**

Global Food Markets

- **modern Western diet & consumer 'choice'**
- **'Irony of Glut' – 1st world obsession with dieting/losing weight**
- **exporting North American diet & diseases**

FIGURE 1

World Vegetable Oil Consumption per Person, 1964-99

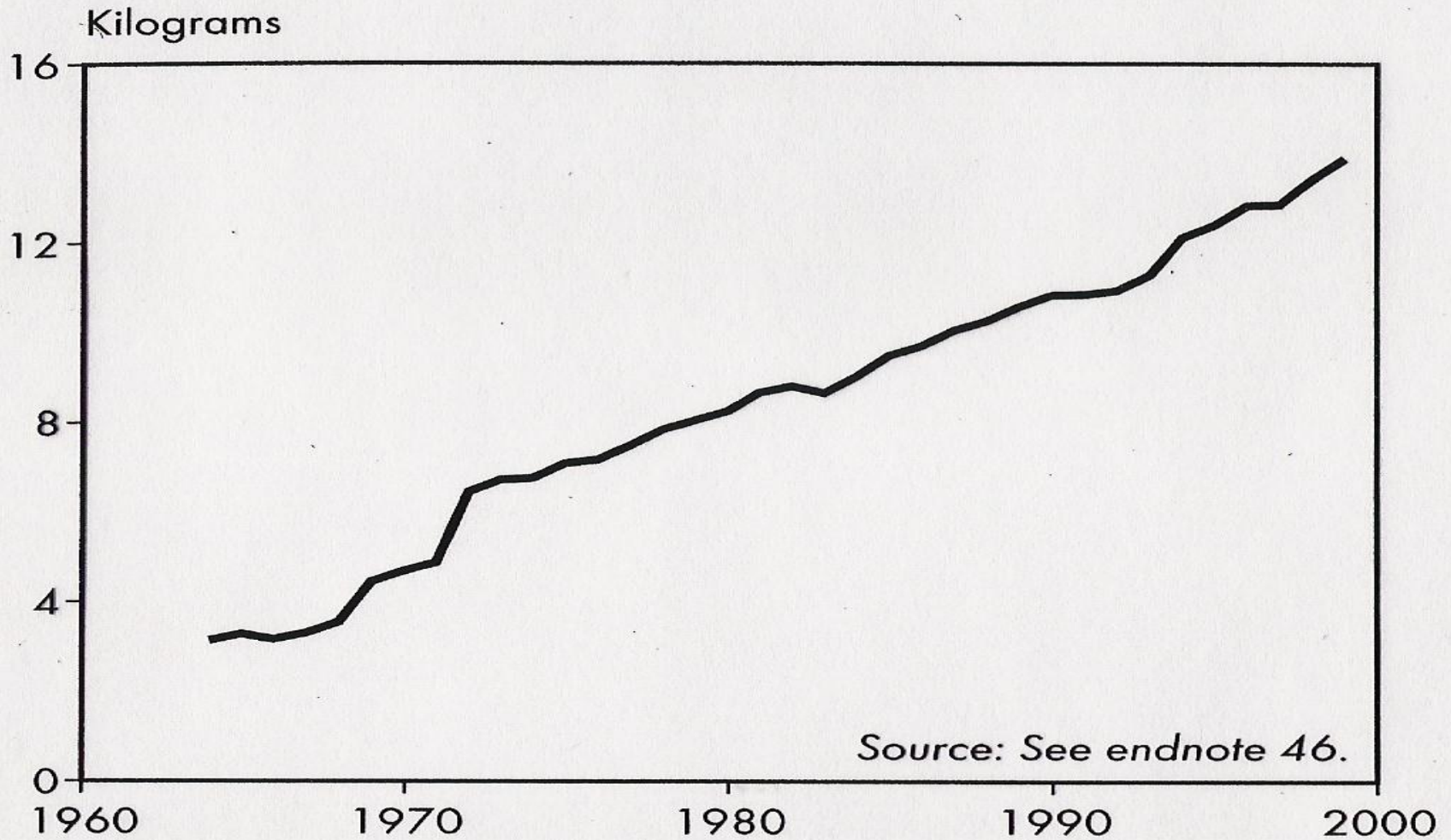


TABLE 2**Share of Children Who Are Underweight and Adults Who Are Overweight, Selected Countries, Mid-1990s**

| Country | Share Underweight (percent) | Country | Share Overweight (percent) |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bangladesh | 56 | United States | 55 |
| India | 53 | Russian Federation | 54 |
| Ethiopia | 48 | United Kingdom | 51 |
| Viet Nam | 40 | Germany | 50 |
| Nigeria | 39 | Colombia | 41 |
| Indonesia | 34 | Brazil | 36 |

Source: See endnote 12.

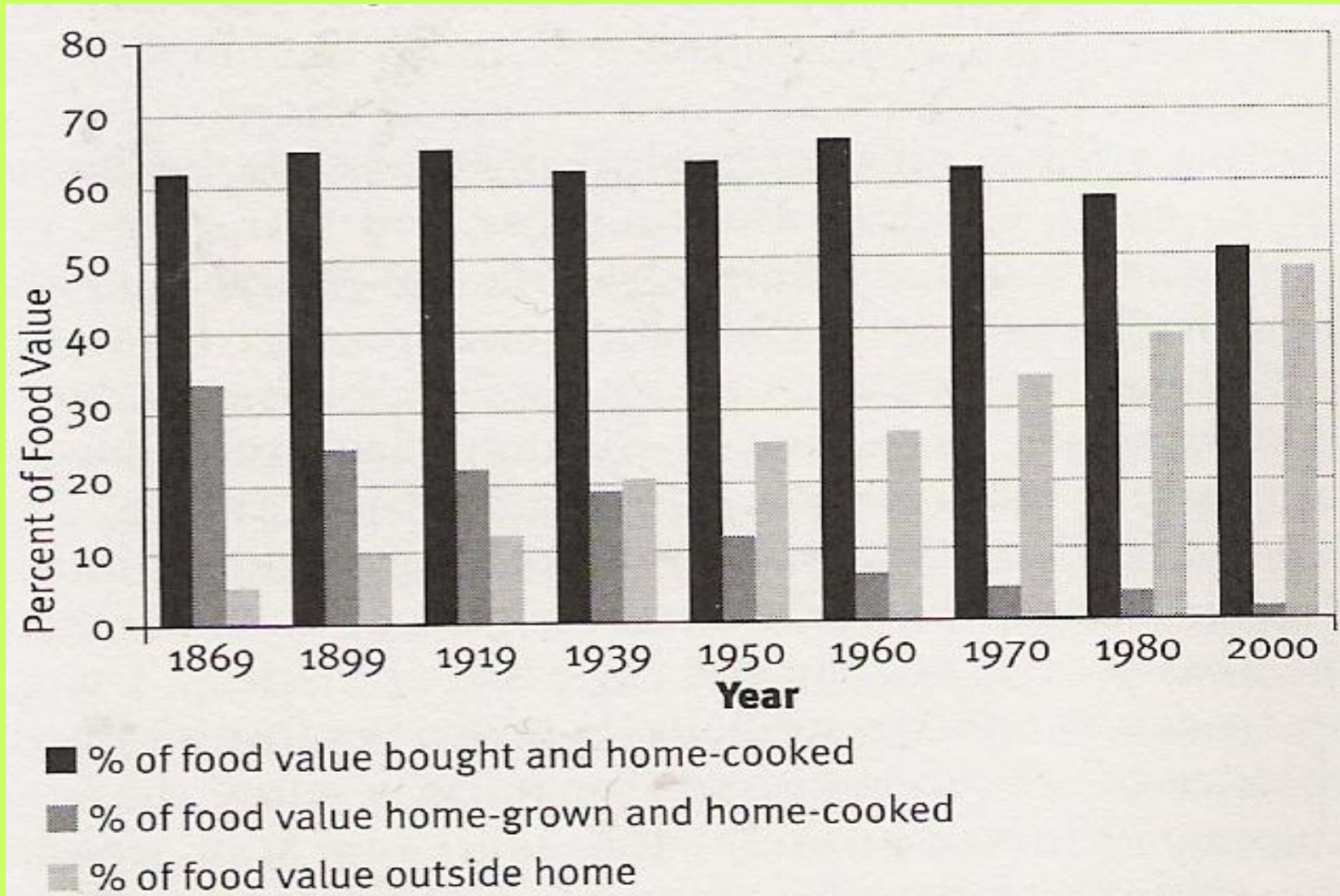
Modernist Food – key elements

- **Industrial food**
- **Eating global**
- **Transporting food**

Modernist Food – key elements

- **Processed food**
- **Rise of the supermarket**
- **Making food**
- **Where we eat**
- **How we eat**

Changing Food Habits, U.S.



Global Food Markets

Choices for developing countries:

- buy food at market rates or face famine?
- manufacture goods for trade or invest in local food production?
- increase cash crops or grow crops to feed own citizens?

Global Food in the 21st Century

- **2050 = 9 billion world population**
- **increase agricultural production?**
- **use existing agriculture OR new methods of biotechnology?**

Global Food in the 21st Century

- **developing countries = most vulnerable re hunger & want**
- **localized & rural process for food security & diversification 'mixed food basket'**
- **1st world inhabitants as global citizens – responsible consumers?**

Global Food in the 21st Century