

SOCIUM · SFB 1342

Working Papers No. 18

Jane Ayeko-Kümmeth
Klaus Schlichte

The state on the countryside: Food security as social policy in Uganda

Jane Ayeko-Kümmeth, Klaus Schlichte

The state on the countryside: Food security as social policy in Uganda

SOCIUM SFB 1342 WorkingPapers, 18

Bremen: SOCIUM, SFB 1342, 2021



Universität
Bremen

SOCIUM Forschungszentrum Ungleichheit und Sozialpolitik /

Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy

SFB 1342 Globale Entwicklungsdynamiken von Sozialpolitik /

CRC 1342 Global Dynamics of Social Policy

Postadresse / Postaddress:

Postfach 33 04 40, D - 28334 Bremen

Websites:

<https://www.socium.uni-bremen.de>

<https://www.socialpolicydynamics.de>

[DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26092/elib/3578>]

[ISSN (Print) 2629-5733]

[ISSN (Online) 2629-5741]

Jane Ayeko-Kümmeth
Klaus Schlichte

The state on
the countryside:
Food security as social
policy in Uganda

SOCIUM • SFB 1342
No. 18

Jane Ayeko-Kümmeth (Jayeko-Kuemmeth@t-online.de),
University of Bayreuth

Klaus Schlichte (klaus.schlichte@uni-bremen.de), Institute of
Intercultural and International Studies & CRC 1342 "Global
Dynamics of Social Policy", University of Bremen

ABSTRACT

In many countries, the benefits of social policies are restricted to a minority of urban wage earners. In Uganda, more than 70 percent of the population, however, currently live in rural areas, working on farms with no direct access to public services other than basic health care or primary schools. In this paper, we intend to look at the history of policies that have aimed to improve the livelihoods of this rural majority—namely, food-security policy. We describe four major stages of this policy in Uganda since early colonial times. During early colonial rule (1900-1930), enforced monetization led to repeated food shortages and famines, which the colonial government answered with a granary policy. In a second period during late colonial times and early independent statehood (1930-1970), Uganda's food situation remained tense, but more attention to the rural economy allowed for partial gains in wealth and production. After a period of impoverishment due to turmoil and civil war (1971-1987), in the current fourth phase, rural poverty and malnutrition have remained widespread in Uganda. Liberal economic policies have led to enormous export growth but not to enhanced food security. Food is exported and malnourishment persists. This paper is a first attempt to track the development of food policy in Uganda, due to the lack of studies on the politics around food in African contexts. We argue for a stronger presence of the social question of the countryside both in international relations and in political science as a whole.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In vielen Ländern profitieren nur urbane Lohnempfänger von sozialpolitischen Maßnahmen. In Uganda leben mehr als 70 Prozent der Bevölkerung jedoch im ländlichen Raum. Als Kleinbauern haben sie keinen Zugang zu anderen Sozialleistungen als zu Primärschulen und Basis-Gesundheitsdiensten. In diesem Arbeitspapier betrachten wir die Geschichte der Politiken, mit denen die Lebensverhältnisse dieser ländlichen Mehrheit seit der Kolonialzeit verbessert werden sollten. Im Mittelpunkt steht dabei die Frage der Ernährungssicherheit. Wir beschreiben vier Phasen dieser Politik: In der frühen Kolonialzeit (1900-1930) verursachte die erzwungene Monetarisierung zur Steuerzahlung wiederholt Nahrungsmittelknappheiten und Hungersnöte. Darauf reagierte die Kolonialverwaltung mit der Einrichtung von Speichern. In der zweiten Periode, der späten Kolonialzeit und frühen Unabhängigkeitsphase (1930-1970), blieb die Ernährungssituation in Uganda angespannt, aber mehr politische Aufmerksamkeit für die ländliche Wirtschaft erlaubte wenigstens teilweise Zuwächse in der Produktion und Kapitalbildung. Nach einer Phase der politischen Instabilität und des Bürgerkriegs (1971-1987) begann die bis heute andauernde vierte Phase. Ländliche Armut und Mangelernährung sind in Uganda immer noch weit verbreitet. Die seit den 1990ern praktizierte liberale Wirtschaftspolitik hat zu erheblichen Exportzuwächsen geführt, aber die Ernährungslage hat sich nicht grundsätzlich verändert. Nahrungsmittel werden zwar exportiert, während Mangelernährung fortexistiert. Dieses Arbeitspapier ist ein erster Versuch, die Entwicklung der Ernährungspolitik in Uganda zu rekonstruieren, denn bisher mangelt es an Studien zur diesem Politikfeld auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent. Unser Beitrag soll deshalb auch zu einer stärkeren Beschäftigung mit der sozialen Frage auf dem Lande in der Politikwissenschaft und in den Internationalen Beziehungen anregen.

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Early colonialism—The birth of a problem	4
3.	Continuities: Late colonialism and early independence	9
3.1	Excursus I: The story of the cooperative	13
4.	Food-security policies under the NRM government since 1986	15
4.1	Excursus II: Operation Wealth Creation	19
5.	Uganda's food policies in the age of internationalized rule	22
	References	23
	List of interviews and structured conversations	28

1. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 brought it to the fore: food is an essentially political topic in Uganda. As regular trade was banned with the lockdown in March 2020, vulnerable groups in Uganda faced hunger. Very quickly, politicians vied for reputation by distributing food packages for free, until the government interdicted this and monopolized dishing out such packages. Three kilograms of beans and 6 kilograms of maize flour were handed out to vulnerable urban households, an act that critical observers interpreted as an opening of campaigning: Uganda would hold presidential elections in January 2021 (MacDonalds & Owor, 2020).

This episode indicates three things. First is a food paradox: although Uganda has favorable agricultural conditions, food security is shaky for many of its people. Uganda is in fact a food exporter, yet there is widespread under- and malnutrition in the country. With this paradox, the country mirrors a global nutrition condition—there is actually enough food available on the planet, yet about 9 percent of the world population are undernourished, according to estimates from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO et al., 2020).

Second, the episode above indicates how political food is. As we will argue in this paper, it is therefore necessary to go beyond a mere technological understanding of the food question and see food policies a contentious political field, like any other social policy.

Third, food policy is social policy, a truism that is almost forgotten. While hunger and malnutrition were a serious problem in Europe until World War II and in its aftermath, growing wealth and agricultural productivity have pushed the question of food security off the agenda of political science, due to its Northwest Atlantic bias. Social policy analysis too, until recently, has been informed only by the European and Northamerican histori-

cal experience (cf. Lang et al., 2001; Riches & Silvasti, 2014). Yet food policy should be an integral part of a truly global understanding of the dynamics of social policy.

That the food problem is a political phenomenon more than a natural one has been repeatedly and prominently argued, for example by Amartya Sen, who hinted at the fundamental role of ownership and entitlement for access to food: "There is indeed no such thing as an apolitical food problem" (Sen, 1982: 459). However, not only are food security and social protection closely linked (cf. Devereux, 2016), but food-security policies overlap massively with agricultural policies in general; this is because food policies are framed in our present. As our case analysis will confirm, there are not only interest groups, client and patronage patterns, ideological understandings, or electoral dynamics at work (cf. Joughin & Mette, 2010), but the food question also is constituted by long historical continuities of colonial agriculture (cf. Kasozi, 1994: 40-48) and by the dynamics of regional and global food markets.

The aim of this paper is to present a first sketch of the historical trajectory of food-security policy¹ in Uganda. As such, it is more descriptive than intensely analytical. The state of data and academic research on food policies in Uganda so far does not allow for strong causal claims, as information is scattered. Policy-related papers of interested ac-

1 *Food security* is a term that gained currency with the World Summit on Food Security in Rome, 1996. Most scholars adapt the definition of the United Nations World Food Security, according to which the term conveys the norm that "all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life." In public and academic discourse, a variety of measures in the fields of agriculture, health, nutrition, trade, and even education are considered to be part of food security policy. We therefore follow this practice here and try to take into account all policies that aimed at improving the nutritional situation in Uganda in the periods under investigation.

tors prevail, and numerical data is beset by validity and reliability problems (cf. Jerven, 2013). This does not imply that a comprehensive causal reconstruction of origins and dynamics of food policies in Uganda is impossible, but it would be an enormous effort and is beyond the scope of the research carried out here. We restrict ourselves here to a descriptive aim, although we will interpret what we see whenever sufficient evidence is present.

Our preliminary argument runs as follows: the description of food policy, of its continuities and changes, reveals the overlooked political nature of these policies in three consecutive stages. All of them, we argue, are political, even though the food question has often been rather presented as a “technical” or merely economic issue. This reduction to technical and developmental aspects has largely been a governmental perspective since colonial times. Questions of food and land as essentially political topics are largely ignored in political science in general and International Relations (IR) in particular. Our general aim is thus to raise awareness of the topic of food security as a theme not just of Ugandan domestic affairs and not only as a form of social policy, but also as an instance of the recent material turn in international political sociology (e.g. Mac Ginty, 2017; Biecker & Schlichte, 2021).

The paper roughly follows a chronological pattern. The first section describes food-security policies in the period of early colonialism. We conceive the years from the 1880s to the 1930s as a period in which the introduction of cash crops in combination with climatic conditions created novel dangers of food insecurity, including several famines. Colonial capitalism—in Uganda, mainly driven by the forceful introduction of cash crops that could generate tax income for the colonial administration—was the first main context of food insecurity and ensuing policies. The main reaction to this was a policy of enforcing granaries at the village level.

A second section deals with the long period of developmentalism. We see such strong continuities between the late colonial period and early Ugandan independence that we put the decades of the 1940s through the 1970s in one section, a choice that runs counter to established periodization. These decades were marked by an expansion of the colonial state and its economy, as well as of formal social policy in Uganda, even if only about 15 percent of the population ultimately benefitted from pension schemes or labor regulation. With the boom of farmer cooperatives, however, at least modest wealth reached the countryside too.

The third part of the paper deals with an extended presence that set in after a period of turmoil, roughly from the early 1970s until the end of the 1980s. During this time, various parts of Uganda experienced extended periods of political violence, interrupting many processes and impoverishing the country.

When the National Resistance Movement (NRM) conquered the capital Kampala at the end of the year 1985, a new period of internationalized rule began. We argue that it was a forerunner of patterns that can be observed in many places: a re-emerging state, incorporating old forms and structures, but molded as well by the prescriptions of international financial institutions supported by bilateral donors with conditional grants, integrated Uganda into world markets. Yet the country remained dependent on the export of primary goods and on labor remittances of an increasingly mobile population. Internally, Uganda’s economy in the 1980s consisted mainly of subsistence farming. This agricultural structure has remained largely unchanged, but it has run into crisis due to population pressure and the encroachment of commercialized farming, i.e. the capitalization of agriculture.

Several other factors play into this problem, apart from the longer historical process outlined so far. Food insecurity in contemporary Uganda is partly also the consequence

of political violence, as in the case of about one million war refugees from South Sudan who have sought refuge in Uganda. Ever more volatile climate conditions limit the calculability of agriculture, as well. We take a closer look at the fate of the current regime's food and agricultural policies. They were originally conceived as a way to fight rural poverty, but ended up as arenas for garnering support for the current regime in electoral competition.

We used qualitative methods of data collection to build this description. The main method to generate primary data was face-to-face interviews with purposively selected respondents. Participants were drawn from sector institutions including the Ministry of Agriculture (MAAIF), agriculture officers at the district level, academics, politicians, NGO representatives, and farmers or farmers' representatives. We carried out interviews and structured conversations with forty-four key informants on social policy in general; and on health, education, and food security.

On the other hand, a randomized sample of interviews and conversations with Ugandans of different social status, regions, and age groups was also added to this material (see list in Appendix). This method proved helpful in developing an impression of what government schemes actually mean in everyday life. While the bulk of interviews and conversations were carried out in Kampala, two excursions—one into a western rural district and one into an eastern rural district, were undertaken in order to bring in non-capital perspectives. These field stays took place in the three months of November and December 2018 (KS) and October 2019 (JAK, KS). Secondary literature, government publications, national statistics, and press reports supplement our material.

For readers not familiar with the social setting of Uganda, a few indications might be helpful at this stage: Like a number of Sub-Saharan African countries, Uganda is still a largely agrarian society. In a territory of roughly 200,000 square kilometers, cor-

responding to the size of Idaho or the former West Germany; and with a current population of 44 million people, Uganda reaches a population density of 180 persons per square kilometer. Out of a GDP of 27 billion USD, the Ugandan state is able to levy 13 percent as recurrent revenue, a rate that is exceptionally low even in Sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Schlichte, 2021; MOFPED, 2018: 46).

Seventy percent of Uganda's exports are agricultural products, and more than 65 percent of its workforce is engaged in agriculture (UBOS, 2019: 35). This resembles the economic structure of Prussia in the mid-nineteenth century, both with regard to employment and to the distribution of farm sizes (cf. Wehler, 1995: 40-42).² However, Uganda is embedded into a different global time and constellation. Most importantly, its social question, which can be seen as the cause and main referent of social policy, is deeply globally embedded as well (cf. Piven & Cloward, 1967; Breman et al., 2019). In Uganda, as in many other countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, social policy as understood in the established sense (pension systems, labor regulation, etc.) is provided only to a minority—namely, to the formal sector, which employs only about 15 percent of the nation's workforce. This means in turn that about 85 percent of the national economy is informal,³ with considerable effects for the validity of numerical data about Uganda's economy and society.

2 Uganda shares other features with Prussia of 1850, including widespread absentee landlordism, mass migration into urban centers, informal settlements, labor emigration, a vast sector of low-paid and low-skilled workers, and a preponderance of patriarchic and quasi-feudal relationships.

3 This distinction has to be made with caution, as non-registered citizens are still taxed through indirect taxes and non-registered businesses become objects of arbitrarily enforced taxation. In practice, there is thus no neat distinction between a formal and an informal Ugandan economy.

Officially, primary education and health services are offered freely, but in practice, schools and health facilities are most often understaffed, overpopulated, and demand side payments. There has therefore been a blossoming both of private schools and health services, of which the better ones are available only to the affluent parts of the urban population.

The vast majority of Ugandans is economically active in small-scale subsistence farming, with farm sizes between two and five acres.⁴ Due to heavy migration toward urban centers, the rural population also maintains intense but mostly informal relations with the urban economy. Temporary occupation, part-time employment, or self-organized activity in the informal sector, predominantly trade, are the norm for the majority of the urban population. Formal definitions of unemployment do not make sense in such a setting (UBOS, 2017: 29). Ugandan society differs from European ones demographically, as well: 50 percent of its population of 44 million is younger than 18 years, with annual population growth of about 3 percent. This growth weighs on all public policies, yet Uganda has seen an increase in life expectancy by fifteen years between 1990 and 2015 (UBOS, 2017: 33).

Uganda's agricultural output, however, with its growth rate of 1,5 per cent has continuously lagged behind population growth of 3,5 per cent (cf. World Bank, 2017). Exports amount to 3 billion USD per year, of which coffee, tea, tobacco, and cotton together constitute 750 million USD per year. In addition to that, over the last years, Uganda has become a major food exporter to neighboring South Sudan, Rwanda, and Kenya. There are furthermore about 1.2 billion USD of labor remittances from Europe, the US, and

the Middle East, which has become a major target zone for young Ugandans to work in low-skilled jobs in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, etc., often under scandalous conditions (cf. Gahigi, 2019).

With a rural majority and agriculture as its main occupational sector, small-scale farming has been both the fallback option and an elastic retreat option in times of political crisis throughout the often unstable and insecure post-independence history of Uganda. With a growing population and an emerging land crisis, the rural social question (cf. Veit et al., 2017) has gained prominence in Uganda, a country of which it was formerly said that it had neither a food nor a land shortage problem (Jameson, 1970).

Notably, Uganda has been an exporter of agricultural products since colonial times, and is still considered by many to be the food basket of East Africa. Uganda's exports have indeed incorporated a growing proportion of food crops such as sugar, maize, rice, and beans. According to World Bank statistics, the four neighboring countries—Kenya, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan—received almost half of Uganda's exports in 2018, mostly consisting of food crops and non-processed coffee (World Bank, 2021). This development stands in a paradoxical relation to the fact that Uganda has considerable food-security issues at the same time. In this regard, Uganda mirrors the global food situation: there is enough, yet a great number of people are malnourished.

2. EARLY COLONIALISM —THE BIRTH OF A PROBLEM

There is no reliable data on the nutrition situation in what is now Uganda prior to colonization. It is reasonable to assume, however, that climatic conditions and warfare between the rivaling kingdoms in the Great Lakes re-

4 One acre is about 4,000 square meters. Thus, two and a half acres correspond to one hectare (100 x 100 m). The average size of farms in Germany is 60 ha, in Switzerland 20 ha. Uganda's climate, however, often allows for three harvests a year.

gion have caused massive shortages of food time and again. During colonial rule, a food insecurity effect set in rather quickly due to the rivalry between food- and cash-crop productions. As in other cash-crop colonies (cf. Amin, 1972), food production suffered from the incentives and coercion that favored the production of cotton, through which a sufficient tax base for the colonial administration was created (cf. Ouedraogo & Schlichte, 2021). With a hut tax and later a poll tax imposed on any male adult in colonial Uganda, the colonial administration left farmers only the choice between wage labor or market production. This monetization was enforced to the detriment of food-crop production, an effect that was felt quickly.

A second effect resulted from the growing dependency on international price levels. The market prices of products like coffee, cotton, tea, and tobacco depended on global trends (Bank of Uganda, 1970: 7). Among the British colonies, Uganda became a leading producer of cotton, but unlike its neighbor Kenya, Uganda was described as a planter's and not settler's colony. Its development would be left to the "natives", as colonial language put it, as there were only very few European plantations, and those exclusively cultivated tea. This world market orientation, first formed under imperial premises, reduced attention to food production and made the colonial state's leverage dependent on this outward-oriented economy and its interest groups. It also meant that price volatility for cash crops could affect food consumption.

Four such interest groups emerged first around the production of cotton: traders and merchants, planters, cotton-ginners, and cotton-buying middlemen (Vincent, 1989: 155). At first, mutual interests outweighed nationality and race and all belonged to the Uganda Chamber of Commerce (UCC), formed in May 1905 to represent the general interest of the commercial sector to the government (Vincent, 1989: 155-157).

As the colonial administration did not see Uganda as a "white man's land," it was committed to policy of development by native agency, and emphasis was laid on the small peasant holding system under European supervision (Parker, 1952: 126). Unlike Kenya, which had a group of European settlers engaged in agriculture, the colonial leadership in Uganda was not involved in the sector until 1931. At that time, only some 106 European settlers were engaged in agriculture, with the number declining in later years.

One decisive precedent for this form of integration into the empire was the Buganda Agreement of 1900. According to this treaty, Britain became the protecting power for the kingdom of Buganda, while at the same time a new land policy was introduced: The king and a large number of Bugandan nobility were registered as owners of square miles of land (*mailo*) on which dependent peasants increasingly produced for local, later imperial, and then global markets. With this co-optation, the British created a stable alliance with local interest. At the time, this was still in line with the semi-feudal and aristocratic cultures in the metropole, but it also entrenched an oligarchy of individualized landowners set free from earlier communal ties (cf. Low, 1971: 42-45). This constellation endogenized the social conflict that arose around the land question, with the consequence that colonial rulers were not held responsible for the processes they triggered.

Commercial agriculture was mainly carried out by Ugandan cash-crop peasants. It was not meant to enrich them, although the colonial government was keen to promote production in alliance with other interests in the empire. Cotton was the first priority, quickly booming due to strong demand from the British textile industry.

Only in the 1950s did coffee become more important in export value. Since then, it has remained the single most important ex-

port good,⁵ even of the independent state, and even though tea and tobacco came on board a little later (Vincent, 1989; Parker, 1952: 127). Cultivation of these crops was regionally clustered, bearing in mind the ecological settings of the protectorate's regions. Tea, for example, was mainly grown in the Nile region, i.e. in parts of Buganda—Njeru and Jinja and in the highlands of Western Uganda. Cotton production was mainly limited to northern and northeastern Uganda. Coffee has remained the dominant cash crop in central, mid-eastern, and western Uganda. The early colonial period can thus be considered a structuring period, as it reflected a historical conjuncture of conflictive local and imperial interests.

The stated goals of the Department of Agriculture, created in 1908, were to ensure basic food supply, to conserve national resources, improve the quality of export crops, and to “blend the whole into a sound system of agriculture,” a set of goals that could be found in declarations of the department as it was renamed a Ministry in 1971 (Nelson & Kazungu, 1973: 16). While the space of what was to become the Ugandan protectorate had known food-security measures like village granaries, in areas like Teso, Karamoja, and western Uganda, cattle were viewed as a sort of insurance and capital stock for periods of strain with minimal or no meat consumption.⁶ Cattle herds served as protection against food insecurity.

For a number of reasons, the colonization of Uganda was not undertaken with the aim of a radical modernization, as historians have stated (cf. Thompson, 2003: 25–28). Beyond the aim of creating an economy from which the costs of colonial rule could be extracted, the political vision of early co-

lonial rule was instead that of a conservative arbiter between different power factions, favoring in particular the kingdoms as allies in the new colonial arrangement. In all four of the traditional kingdoms of the protectorate, individualized land property rights were introduced, called “freehold tenure.” The eastern and northern parts of Uganda maintained communal forms of land use during colonial times, although legally, all land was declared the ultimate possession of the Crown. The paternalist ideal of colonial rule connected to this legal basis was to allow for a continuity of rural livelihoods extended by a level of market-oriented production by Ugandan farmers (cf. Ehrlich, 1963).

Soon, it became obvious that these legal settings were superseded by the formation of interest, including that of Ugandan producers. By 1911, the Uganda Chamber of Commerce (UCC) —a nationwide umbrella organization for the private sector without any distinction along colonial groups—no longer served the needs of the European population adequately. Its numbers had been swollen by an influx of new planters, the economy had diversified, and commercial competition took on ethnic dimensions. Europeans, for example, formed the Uganda Planters Association, and Asians formed the Indian Association. When the export of cotton began to dominate the economy after World War I, the Uganda Cotton Growers Association (UCGA) came into existence to operate independently of both the UCC and the ethnic associations. “It proved to be an effective lobby on the colonial government, not least because of its metropolitan connections with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce” (Vincent, 1989: 158). The year 1920, when investment in Uganda amounted to between \$650,000 and \$1 million, was the critical juncture in the struggle between administrative and commercial forces. By this time the commercial sector, dominated by the mainly African cotton growers' association, was substantially influencing the

5 The picture looks different if we consider human labor a commodity. According to the Bank of Uganda, annual labor remittances amount to 1.2 billion USD (Barigaba, 2019), which is three times the value of annual coffee exports.

6 Interview (KS) with social science lecturer, Makerere University, November 2019.

colonial government and affecting legislation (Vincent, 2018: 158).

In a number of districts, famines and hunger re-occurred again and again before 1918 for various reasons. For example, Bunyoro, devastated during a war of colonial conquest (1893-4), experienced famines in 1902, 1904-5, 1910-11, 1914 and 1917-18 (Doyle 2006: 142). A weakened local society could not cope with epidemics of sleeping sickness, drought, or excessive rainfall. Food production that was already low became insufficient in such instances.

Famine also occurred between 1917 and 1919 in Teso District, a region in which cotton had increasingly been cultivated. As this affected a core production zone for cotton, the colonial district administration obliged all farms to deliver storable food for a centralized granary system. Cassava, being least sensitive against drought and locust incursions, was favored, and noncompliance was sanctioned with fines or forced labor. In the late 1920s, food security was achieved by obliging farmers to reserve at least a quarter acre for food crops (Vail, 1972: 108). Generally, the local cultivation and local storage of famine food was encouraged; this was usually cassava or sweet potatoes, a high-yield and easily cultivated carbohydrate-rich plant (Little, 1991: 12). The colonial administration, however, had no overall evidence about the health and nutrition situation of the population. Only the situation of prisoners, workers etc. was known. Medical officers were few in number and could only do supervisory work, lacking knowledge about the situation in the mass of villages (Little, 1991: 12).

The colonial administration became able to cope with famines only around 1920, as communication and infrastructure for a long time did not allow quick transport of food into affected areas. During the 1920s, however, famines causing great mortality ceased in British colonial Africa (Iliffe, 1987: 158), seemingly also due to the introduction of local granaries. The background of this devel-

opment was most often the increased need for labor force in almost all colonial economies, as is documented for Uganda, too (cf. Hailey, 1938: 530). The maintenance of a sufficient labor force caused food-security interventions (Veit et al., 2017).⁷

It was during early colonial rule that food security became a political issue, even if this terminology was not yet used (cf. Hailey, 1938: 1653). Food shortages were often connected with allusions to allegedly worse conditions in precolonial times. Such conventional colonial wisdom “discharged the colonial state of responsibility for the problem and eliminated the need to review colonial economic policies” (Little, 1991: 12). Malnutrition became persistent in the 1920s (Iliffe, 1987: 143, 159). Why was that so? There is no historiographical work on this question, and health and food production statistics did not exist in Uganda prior to World War II. Yet one might assume that food production was crisis-stricken because of two massive changes: First, production patterns changed with the enforced taxation. Even for average farmers, cash-crop production became an option to obtain the necessary cash sum to avoid arrest or corporal punishment. The alternative was the second reason for change: labor migration. Wage labor was offered either in the few emerging sugar plantations or in the urban colonial economy. With labor migration and changes in the agricultural division of labor (cf. Middleton, 1971), an even greater burden was put on women in cultivation and impeding the extension of acreage, as bush clearing was male work. Evidence for this mechanism exists in the case of the West Nile, a district that

7 The effect of Ugandan war participation in WWI can also not be excluded. About 7,000 Ugandans joined the King's African Rifles between 1914 and 1918, and more than 140,000 Ugandans served as porters during the military campaigns (UNA, n. d.). The provision of services for war veterans and the increase in infrastructure for war efforts might have provided avenues for the expansion of public services.

became a kind of internal labor reserve within the Protectorate of Uganda. Here, male labor migration caused renewed famine in the 1940s. The problem was noted by a colonial agriculture officer in 1943, who saw “the insatiable appetite of the armed forces and the continued exploitation of manpower for cheap plantation labor” (quoted after Leopold, 2003: 78) as the root causes of stagnating or regressing food production. In Karamoja district, food security deteriorated during colonial rule due to territorial changes that barred pastoralists from access to pastures, which resulted in overgrazing and long-term destruction of livelihoods (Mamdani, 1982; Gartrell, 1985).

The issue of nutrition, as it was labeled, had threefold relevance. First, famines would destabilize colonial rule from within and would induce farmers to rebound to food-crop cultivation, to the detriment of cash crops (Vail, 1972: 108). Second, in order to maintain a stable and healthy workforce, stable food production became a requirement for the colonial economy. Third, critical observation of colonial practice and even paternalist self-observation of the colonial administration turned famine potentially scandalous, in particular as the terminology of a protectorate connoted a moral obligation to secure the safety of colonial subjects (e.g. Buell, 1928; Dimier, 2004). Among others, the League of Nations had set standards about nutrition that the British colonial administration could not ignore (cf. Cépède, 1984; Little, 1991).⁸ The British themselves finally undertook a nutritional survey in dependencies in 1936 (Little, 1991: 12). This also meant that the introduction of a delo-

calized dietary standard, based on European food consumption patterns, became the yardstick for evaluating African food consumption. Since then, the lack of protein and vitamins has been a constant feature in the scientific evaluation of diet in African countries (Little, 1991: 12).

The colonial policy to achieve food security by favoring subsistence farming and local storage instead of market-oriented production might have had its rationality, given the rudimentary infrastructure and ensuing high costs to transport food to places of consumption. It met criticism in the late colonial period, however. Examples from Ghana and India were reported to have shown that recourse to market solutions had led to more specialization and increased productivity in agriculture (Vail, 1972: 111). The East African Royal Commission uttered the same criticism in its report from 1953-55 (Uchendu & Anthony, 1975: 34).

The Second World War can be considered a watershed event in the history of colonialism in Uganda. The return of about seventy thousand Ugandans from the battlefields in Southeast Asia triggered a lot of colonial social policy activity. The infrastructure of a national banking system via post offices was created; new vocational schools emerged; and coinciding with a row of strikes in the capital in 1945, the colonial administration became fully aware of the need to reform. It was during the period of Andrew Cohen acting as governor from 1952 to 1957 that the most important changes took place also with regard to agricultural and therefore food policies (cf. Cohen, 1959).

Change had set in, however, before more active policies of development began. Legislative councils in the protectorate included “Asians”⁹ as early as 1921, and Africans were admitted to these councils only in 1945. The kingdoms with their councils had been pow-

8 Interest was involved here as well, it seems: Stanley Melbourne Bruce, prime minister of Australia in the 1920s, promoted nutrition standard setting, expecting a positive effect for Australia’s exports (cf. Cépède, 1984: 283). Canada, New Zealand, and Argentina all supported his move, being large food exporters themselves (Little, 1991: 11).

9 In everyday parlance in East Africa, descendants from South Asian immigrants are often still called ‘Asians’ or ‘Wahindi’.

erful negotiators with the colonial state all the time, in particular Buganda.

Contemporaries in the British imperial public believed that economic problems in colonies were the root of outbreaks of unrest in colonies in the late 1930s, as had happened in Jamaica, Palestine, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Trinidad, and Northern Rhodesia (Constantine, 1984: 229). A royal commission that investigated the so-called “riots” in the West Indies had come up with the recommendation of increased welfare spending (Wicker, 1958: 181). The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 was a response to these—from an imperial perspective—critical tendencies. This change coincided with new attention at the international level to the question of food and rural poverty in the early 1940s (cf. Robins, 2018; Bonnecase, 2009), culminating in the foundation of the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945 as part of the United Nations system (cf. Wolkenhauer, 2021).

3. CONTINUITIES: LATE COLONIALISM AND EARLY INDEPENDENCE

During the sixty-seven years of its existence, colonial Uganda moved through three phases in the development of its agrarian policy. Each reflected sequential response to the way agrarian capitalism was developing. In its formative phase (1895-1930), the colonial state had begun to transform non-capitalist African subjects into individual landowners, market-oriented producers, or wage earners. Then it embarked on a phase of consolidation and retrenchment, as nascent class differences were emerging (Vincent, 1989: 159-160). The “social question” in the colonies came to the forefront in the 1930s, and the colonial state had to find an answer to conflicts that resulted from social differentiation and newly organized political actors. Like in other African settings (cf. Cooper, 1996; Eckert, 2019), the social ques-

tion in colonial Uganda was furthermore underlined as leftist political parties brought the issue of poverty and exploitation in the colonies to the metropolitan agenda (cf. Butler, 1999; Lee, 1967). The Fabian Society in Britain and the Popular Front government in France created a different perception of the social question in the colonies as a whole. The third era of colonial rule is an era of development. It is partly an outcome of this change, in addition to its international pivots (Rist, 1997; Büschel & Speich, 2009).

We follow here an approach that rather underlines the continuities between late colonial rule and the early independence period (cf. Schlichte, 2021). While the change of political system, the achievement of sovereignty, and the quickly progressing “Africanization” of administrative staff of course mark a sea change in international politics and in the entire framing of politics on the African continent, we argue that with regard to social policy, including the food/agriculture nexus, continuities prevailed, even if services and spending were massively expanded in the first decade of independence. This section tries to demonstrate this with regard to statements in policy papers and programmatic declarations of both colonial and post-colonial governments. Continuous perceptions of the food situation in Uganda shined through here. This also applies to the emergence and development of cooperatives in the agricultural sector that we will describe in an excursus (3.1).

In the case of Uganda, continuity between the late colonial state and the early independent state concerns not only the territorial shape, the internal administrative division, and apparatus but also economic structures and political styles (cf. Glasman & Schlichte, 2021): Like the “progressive” Governor Andrew Cohen, in office from 1952 to 1957, independent Uganda’s heads of state have considered themselves to be enlightened, supreme arbiters that can do without political competition by relying on a functional state apparatus only (Thompson, 2003: 347).

The bilateral relation to the colonial power was supplemented by international organizations. Since 1962, when Uganda gained independence, the World Bank and later the International Monetary Fund increasingly assumed the function of financial supervisors of the Ugandan government, overtaking this function from the Colonial Office. So, from 1962 onwards at the latest, national food and agricultural policies cannot be considered independently from international policy discussions. The international replaced the imperial.

Nutrition standards also became an international issue in the context of World War II.¹⁰ From that time onwards, food—not yet framed as food security—was considered both an economic question with regard to the import and export of food and as a health issue. Consequently, food and agricultural policies in Uganda of the 1950s were put into that same framing. The annual report of the Department of Agriculture for 1957, for example, placed food security as the first aim of the policy, namely “to encourage the maximum production of suitable economic crops for export or for local use,” as well as “to ensure that the cultivators produce sufficient food for themselves and for the consuming public, of a type and quality to meet their dietetic needs” (Uganda Protectorate, 1958: 1). The same report states that “supplies of food were adequate in all areas and the few shortages which occurred were easily made good by sales of food from more favorable areas and by purchase of maize meal through trade channels” (Uganda Protectorate, 1958: 3). The need for this was apparent to the colonial power-holders as well: The East African Royal Commission estimated in the mid-1950s that only 12 percent of the population exceeded the age of forty-five and that nearly half of all children

died before reaching the age of fifteen (quoted after Elkan, 1961: 10).

The continuity stated above comes to the fore in a similar policy statement of the young independent Ugandan republic of 1963: “The main aims of the Department were: (i) to ensure adequate supplies of the foodstuffs which can be efficiently produced under local conditions ...” (Uganda Government, 1963: 1). The production and quality of cash crops appeared only as the third goal in this policy statement.

Food insecurity and even famine were not absent in late colonialism or early independence. Iteso farmers, for example, had accepted drought or locust infestation as causes of food shortages and even famine, forces over which they had limited or no control. New technical equipment somewhat reduced the damage brought by locusts. In addition to that, the diversification of staple crops was intended to be used as a strategy to avoid famine (Uchendu & Anthony, 1975: 34).

While FAO representatives saw an important cause of food insecurity in the negligence of small-scale food producers, the colonial administration had another interpretation that is very much in line with the overall paternalist attitude of the colonial government (cf. Ehrlich, 1963): The attitude of a former colonial agricultural economist was typical here when he contradicted FAO judgements about the food situation in Africa. He argued that Uganda had a sufficiently productive agriculture and that caloric-protein deficiencies were largely due to “the ignorance of consumers” (Cleave, 1968: 84). Earlier colonial reports shared this viewpoint that attitudes were lagging behind:

“It is a fallacy to assume that the desire for money operates as an incentive in such conditions to anything like the same extent as it operates in territories where a cash economy has been built up over centuries;...” (Watson, 1954: 30)

10 It is still an open question to what extent the “war effort” of Uganda, the withdrawal of a tenth of the male workforce, and the intensified production had repercussions on the nutrition situation in Uganda and elsewhere in colonial empires.

"The incentive therefore for the majority of farmers to increase their cash income is limited; leisure and time for social intercourse (including drinking parties) are more valuable to them than money after their limited cash wants have been met." (Watson, 1954: 31)

At the same time, the changed intra-imperial and international attitude toward food and agriculture also had real effects on the policy level: The colonial government set up regional agricultural research colleges in Arapai, Bukalasa, Busitema, and Ssesse. Each of the colleges started to conduct research on regional crops and ecological factors. This scientization of food policy (cf. Ouedraogo & Schlichte, 2021) went hand in hand with other forms of "outreach" to small-scale farmers. In the Report of the Agricultural Productivity Committee of 1954, more access to loans, demonstration farms, enlarged extension services of consultants, and the creation of central buffer stocks were recommended in order to improve the food situation in Uganda (Watson, 1954: 52, 94).

In 1962, agricultural research colleges, however, suffered from a shortage of applicants as other professions seemed more attractive to the still small number of secondary-school leavers. This forced the government to invite some three thousand farmers to attend two-week courses in the five district farm institutes (Uganda Government, 1963: 3). This pattern of educating a staff of consultants, working later on district levels, and inviting farmers for short-term teaching has remained a practice throughout the history of independent Uganda up until the present, only interrupted by periods of massive political violence or state decay.

Independent Uganda also continued to depend strongly on world market prices for a few exported agricultural products, among which coffee has remained the single most important. The tradeoff situation between cash- and food-crop productions thus continued and made food production and consumption to some extent dependent on vol-

atile world market price levels for exported agricultural products, which were out of the government's control. The growth of the GDP in 1969 by 12.5 percent, for example, was mainly due to a catastrophic coffee harvest in Brazil, leading to a sharp rise in coffee prices on the world market (Bank of Uganda, 1970: 7).

Milton Obote, the first prime minister and later president of independent Uganda, ruled over a country in which life expectancies hovered around forty-five years, with few public medical services and few secondary schools beyond those run by the churches, and with an economy consisting of two-thirds of human traction-based agriculture. However, the new regime radicalized the modernist policies of its colonial predecessor.

The first Five-Year Development Plan of the independent state (1961-1965) was premised on a World Bank mission report, directed by the Harvard economist Edward S. Mason. The plan put agriculture center stage, but it did not suggest to change production patterns massively (Obwona et al., 2014: 4). Instead, with the expansion of public service and the massive investment in public education and health, spending soared in order to care for the quickly growing population of eight million in 1968.

A second development plan (1966-1971) provided a series of measures to revive the economy, most of them predicated on a turnaround in export crops. These measures included, among others, higher prices to farmers through a series of devaluations of the local currency. Farm prices plummeted to a fraction of their value at the start of the decade, at a time when external prices fairly held their own (up to the late 1970s), thus the transfer of resources from the agricultural sector.¹¹ In the face of monopolizing

11 Daily Monitor (July 15, 2018). Obote attempts to revive the collapsing economy. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/PeoplePower/Obote-attempts-rescue-collapsing-economy/689844-4662950-kfgeq3/index.html> accessed 12.12.2019.

state marketing boards, farmers increasingly smuggled cash crops to neighboring countries or simply stopped growing them. Exports fell to one-third of their levels at the beginning of the decade, and that, in an economy always dependent on its export sector, finally ground down all productive activities.¹² Massive malnutrition or famine, in any case, does not feature prominently in the literature of the time. Instead, improving the standards of farming was presented as the only problem of Uganda's agriculture by the leading experts, most still former colonial agricultural officers (cf. Jameson, 1970).

Internally, inflation generally increased during the 1960s while prices for crops decreased, thus demotivating farmers. This resulted in low volumes of export commodity production and a decline in per capita food production and consumption (Byrnes, 1990: 110). The "Move to the Left" effort, by which the Obote government tried to steer the country in another direction, came too late, and the coup d'état by General Idi Amin ended Obote's rule in early 1971. Political insecurity in the 1970s, coupled with mismanagement and a lack of adequate resources, negatively impacted the incomes from commercial agriculture.

Due to the lack of any reliable data, the food situation in Uganda during the 1970s is difficult to ascertain. A persistent reason for these difficulties is that the non-monetarized subsistence food production is not measured, as it does not enter monetary accounting (cf. Obwona et al., 2014: 4).¹³ Also, statistical measurement and research stopped during Idi Amin's rule. Despite a renewed interest (cf. Hansen, 2013), the 1970s in Uganda are, in terms of social sciences, almost a black hole. The reconstruction of social ten-

dencies under Amin has remained a historiographic challenge. There is still no serious work on the real situation of the 11.5 million Ugandans (1975), of which 90 percent lived on the countryside (Schultheis, 1975: 5).

Nevertheless, some major shifts became visible. Two years after the coup d'état, economic output and administrative capacities sharply declined, not the least because of the expulsion of around eighty thousand Asians, many of them Ugandan citizens and third-generation immigrants. The loss of expertise in the economy but also in administrative and technical fields, combined with the oil crisis and deteriorating domestic security, triggered a downward spiral that ended for a short period with the disposal of Amin in 1979 by Ugandan exiles and Tanzania's army (cf. Hansen, 2013). By the end of Amin's rule, Uganda's manufacturing production level was down to almost zero (Obwona et al., 2014: 7). During this period, as a coping mechanism, peasants scaled down cash-crop production and turned to growing food crops, with the assumed effect of "little malnutrition" (Hansen, 2013: 98; Nyeko, 1998).

By 1980, production levels were lower than during the 1960s. The situation was made worse by the declining state of road infrastructure, which made it difficult to market and transport produce (Byrnes, 1990: 110). While, in relative terms, agriculture remained the highest income earner, generating about two-thirds of GDP, 95 percent of export revenues, and 40 percent of government revenues in the 1980s, the Amin years, the war of his disposal, and the breakdown of services led to largescale famine in Karamoja district, to which international non-governmental organizations and the World Food Program answered with food aid for about three hundred thousand people (Biellik & Henderson, 1981).

12 Interview (JAK) with university lecturer, Kampala, October 17, 2019, Kampala.

13 Usual proxy measures, such as money amounts in circulation and energy consumption by which the monetarized informal economy can be assessed, do not work here either.

3.1 Excursus I: The story of the cooperative

Up until late colonial times, most Ugandan farmers had remained undercapitalized, still relying on human traction and still producing more for their own consumption and local markets. The lack of capital, infrastructure, and marketing capacities limits diversification for exports. The interplay of the late colonial and early independence period appears in retrospect to be a progressive period in Ugandan history, also with regard to agriculture and food security, as the boom of cooperatives allowed for capital formation and alleviated the food situation in many areas. With an average farm size of eight acres during the early 1970s (Jameson, 1970: 5), both food and cash crops could be produced, a diversification that allowed many Ugandans to make ends meet. Many consider this period to be progressive because of the rise and success of producers' cooperatives. These marketed mostly cash crops such as cotton, coffee, and tobacco but stretched into dairy and meat production as well. Joint marketing and processing not only allowed economies of scale in these steps but also enhanced the farmers' negotiation leverage and seemed to have allowed for capital formation on the country side as well, since cooperatives offered farmers access to capital. The effects on food security could be seen in newly created storage silos for cases of food emergencies, which however had become rare in the period. Beans and maize stored in silos were either sold, mostly to Kenya, or used, in the 1980s, to repay Tanzania for its efforts to dispose Amin.¹⁴

The story of cooperatives in Uganda is, however, mixed. The most successful ones became targets of corruptive behavior or were used as starting points for politicians' careers. It is probably for this latter reason that the current government has not contin-

ued with the expansions of cooperatives in the mid-1980s when it overtook power. Several interlocutors explain the late support for cooperatives—only in 2011 did a respective law come into being, reportedly on civil society and donor pressure—with the fear that successful cooperatives could become independent power bases beyond the control of the ruling party.¹⁵

The history of cooperatives in Uganda can be traced back to 1913 when four farmers decided to market their crops collectively in what is now Mubende district. They came to be known as the Kinuakulya Growers. Similarly, in 1920, five groups of farmers in Mengo met in Kampala to form the Buganda Growers Association with the goal to control the domestic and export marketing of members' produce. The idea was adapted countrywide, leading to the formation of the cooperative movement (Ahimbisibwe, 2019). The cooperative movement was thus a counterforce against the unfavorable terms of trade and was used to bypass a trade system that was monopolized by Ugandan Asians and Europeans. Both groups used their leverage in the Legislative Council to block the expansion of African–Ugandan cooperatives (Young et al., 1981: 59).

Being the two major income earners, coffee and cotton became the center of cooperative activities in Uganda, in which both the colonial and post-independence governments were keenly interested because export taxes were the main recurrent revenue of the state (cf. Schlichte, 2021). For a long time, the colonial government opposed the creation of cooperatives and enacted laws that made it an offense for any financial institution to give credit to an African farmer. The restrictions forced cooperatives to operate underground. In 1946, when the cooperative ordinance was enacted to legalize their operations, peasant farmers saw it as

14 Interview (KS) with former minister, October 14, 2019, Kampala.

15 "It is difficult to rule a rich man," as quoted from an interview (JAK, KS) with a Farmer Association representative, Kampala, October 25, 2019.

a means to increase government control in their business, and many groups refused to register under it (Vincent, 1989: 159).

The year 1952 was a turning point in the history of cooperatives as the then new governor for Uganda, Sir Andrew Cohen, became interested in policies that would turn cooperatives into collaborative rather than protest organizations. His liberal ideas led to the amendment of the ordinance, which then gave birth to the Cooperative Societies Act of 1952. The act was more accommodative and provided the framework for rapid economic development (Young et al., 1981: 62). By the time of its independence in 1962, Uganda had fourteen cotton ginneries and seven coffee-curing factories in the hands of cooperative unions. Many people were employed, and cooperative unions became the most conspicuous institutions in the districts. This was facilitated by favorable policies as the then government viewed cooperatives as instruments for rural development (Ahimbisibwe, 2019).

Cooperatives unified farmers, did the marketing, and improved access to capital, leading to the immense expansion of cooperative movement. It covered nearly every sector, including fishing, dairy, cattle marketing, hides and skins, transport, building and housing, handicrafts savings, and credit. This growth was fueled by heavy government support through the direct assistance and subsidized services, coupled with improved transport infrastructure and security, which enabled them to transport and market their goods. In 1964, Uganda Co-operative Development Bank (UCDB) was formed to mobilize cooperative savings and generate funds for cooperative development. A cooperative training college was established in Bukalasa, and two others were built in Kigumba and Masindi. Through their effect of capital creation on the country side, cooperatives enhanced food security, and their cooperative unions became active in every district. In addition, they developed and built their own stores and, eventually, processing factories such as

tobacco dryers, cotton ginneries, and maize mills. By 1982, the government under Obote II had constructed national silos in every region, providing storage for produce such as beans, maize, and cow peas. Occasionally, food was exported to neighboring countries such as Tanzania and Kenya, as in the case of emergencies. Food security was taken care of domestically, and it also generated income. In addition, it was strategically used to calculate regional relations. With further legislation in parliament, cooperators embraced the insurance and transport sector, leading to the creation of the Uganda Cooperative Transport Union. The transport union operated a fleet of lorries and buses that traveled long distances and enhanced mobility throughout the country. By 1985, the union had three hundred vehicles, up from a mere seventeen in 1979. At the same time, Uganda also had five ships running along Lake Victoria, which created export routes through neighboring Tanzania.¹⁶ All of these facilitated trade and marketing, thus easing the work of the cooperatives. Furthermore, the Uganda Cooperative Alliance (UCA) Ltd, which represented cooperatives both nationally and internationally, advocated for favorable policies on cooperatives, provided capacity building on business practices, business skills development support, and advisory services, and mobilized resources for cooperative movement in Uganda.

Cooperatives remained strong throughout the early post-independence period, including the Amin era. Those who lived to see Amin's rule described him as "anti-intellectual, but did not fear the cooperatives power."¹⁷ During Amin's regime, the number of primary cooperatives increased from 2,500 in 1971 to 3,054 in 1978, whereas

16 The union had a fleet of buses that traveled a long journey throughout the country (interview [KS] with former minister, October 14, 2019, Kampala, personal memory [JAK]).

17 Interview (KS) with former minister, October 14, 2019, Kampala.

the number of cooperative unions grew from thirty-six to forty-six (Byrnes, 1990: 104). Around the mid-1980s, cooperatives started to decline. Declining prices for agricultural produce forced farmers to sell produce at higher prices on illegal markets in neighboring countries (ibid: 111). The 1980s efforts by the government to raise producer prices for export crops, in order to maintain some incentive for farmers to deal with government purchasing agents, failed to prevent widespread smuggling. This was made worse by increased political instability, lack of adequate resources, and mismanagement (Vincent, 2018).

With the takeover of the NRM government, cooperatives were not only treated as state-owned enterprises by the IFI¹⁸ but the regime also saw them as a political threat because they provided avenues for people to gather and pool resources that could be used to exert political pressure. One respondent described the government's perception of cooperatives as follows: "it is difficult to rule a rich man." In this way, the regime feared that, with this finance, a rebellion could be funded.¹⁹ In 2011, the government passed the first comprehensive National Co-operatives Policy, which sought to "strengthen the cooperative movement; create a conducive regulatory regime and promote compliance, ensure quality assurance, standards and enhance competitiveness and expand the scope of cooperative enterprise." Pressured by donors and civil society, the government is revitalizing cooperatives on the assumption that they could hold the key to problems related to sustainable, people-centered, and equitable development.

In 2015, the Co-operatives Societies Act (Amendment Bill 2015) was passed, aiming to strengthen the regulation of cooperatives and improve their management. The new

policy places cooperatives directly under the control of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Co-operatives. By 2015, the ministry had registered 16,587 cooperatives, out of which 944 were engaged in agriculture marketing.²⁰ The architecture of this supervision can be seen as a strategic political move because, unlike the past cooperative acts that had enabled them to be self-managing, the new policy puts them under direct government control, including the appointment of leading personnel.²¹ This serves to show the intricate policy processes involving internal and external actors, and at the same time it shows how policy is designed to serve specific interests of the political elite (Ayeko-Kümmeth, 2015).

4. FOOD-SECURITY POLICIES UNDER THE NRM GOVERNMENT SINCE 1986

The current government of Uganda came to power in 1986 by a guerrilla war. The NRM, originally modeled after Maoist principles present in many state parties in the tradition of African socialism, has meanwhile repeatedly renewed its mandate in several elections. However, most external observers and many Ugandans consider these elections unfair, as party and state structures are not clearly separated, and public means seem to be systematically siphoned off into campaigning for the ruling party (cf. Tripp, 2010).

Regarding the political history of Uganda since 1986, the victory of the NRM after five years of "bush war" can be explained through two means. For at least two decades,

18 Interview (KS) with former minister, October 14, 2019, Kampala; Assimwe (2018: 151).

19 Interview (JAK, KS) with representative of Ugandan Farmers Association, Kampala October 24, 2019.

20 How the Co-operative Movement is very much alive in Uganda, https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1416616/-operative-movement-alive-uganda accessed December 2, 2019.

21 Interview (JAK, KS) with Farmer Association representative, Kampala, October 25, 2019; for the most recent state of cooperatives in Uganda, see the analysis of two districts by Mugisha et al. (2016).

Uganda was considered a poster child of the IFI's efforts to reduce poverty by improving basic health and primary education. Billions of USD came as foreign aid, a large share of it came as grants, and a myriad of international agencies have been involved in basically all fields of public service (cf. Schlichte, 2008), cooperating with a government that has fully embraced the "developmentality" of the international financial institutions (IFI) (Sande Lie, 2015). This influx of aid money meant a nominal growth in the 1990s, but it did not transform the Ugandan economy. In the third decade of its rule, after 2006, this positive image eroded despite continuous growth rates (cf. Wiegratz et al., 2018: 16). In this section, we will show how far the development of food security is part of this tendency.

One of the key focus areas of the NRM government during its early years was the transformation of poor peasants into income earners. Considering that nearly 70 percent of the country's population depends on agriculture, which, according to government statistics, equally contributes 25 percent to the national GDP (Asiimwe, 2018: 151), the NRM government developed a great number of policies, programs, and strategies to address sector changes. We will present most of them in the following, yet none of them has brought a fundamental change of the situation that there is widespread malnutrition in particular the rural poor.

The Rural Development Plan of 1987 aimed to increase the production of traditional cash crops and to promote the production of nontraditional agricultural exports, such as maize, beans, groundnuts, soybeans, sesame seeds, and a variety of fruit products.

The Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) of 2001 provided a framework for agricultural policy development and ties in with the national Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). The PEAP had four main goals: creating a framework for economic growth and structural transformation; ensuring good governance and security; directly increas-

ing the ability of the poor to raise incomes; and directly increasing the quality of life of the poor (PMA: vi). The PMA also envisions eradicating poverty through "a profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agro-industrial sector." (PMA: vi). The main mission is defined as transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture. It is operationalized through a decentralized administrative and political framework of Uganda (i.e., the responsibility for implementation of activities in the field lies with the districts and subcounties) (Local Government).

Part of the PMA program was of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) Act of 2001. It created the NAADS, which in 2014 was subordinated to Operation Wealth Creation (OWC, see section 3.1), run by the Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF). The NAADS was intended to operate as a nationwide extension service to farmers, delivering improved inputs (seeds, seedlings, etc.), and to develop marketing and commercialization for agricultural production (MAAIF, 2016: vi). Farmers who wanted to benefit from the program had to link up as groups in order to solicit specific technological and input support as a group (cf. Benin et al., 2012). Funding for it came from the World Bank, the Danish aid agency, the European community, and the Ugandan government. The NAADS was one of the only two pillars of the PMA that was indeed implemented (Joughin & Kjaer, 2010: 67), and in its initial phase, it seems to have had a positive effect on participating farmers' input, but later on, success declined with growing mismanagement.

Finally, the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) of 2013 should become the master plan for agricultural-related interventions. It aims to transform the sector from peasant subsistence farming into commercial agriculture, where high-quality seeds and other agricultural inputs are critical. Since the enactment of the PMA, several policies on agriculture have been formulated and passed.

These include the National Seed Policy, National Animal Feeds Policy, National Food and Nutrition Policy, and National Agricultural Extension Strategy. All are framed within the context of the PMA and PEAP and are aligned to the NAP and the overall National Development Plan (NDP).

The PMA not only led to this array of policies, programs, and strategies but also the transformation of several agricultural agencies. For instance, what used to be marketing boards have been transformed into authorities, whereas several other directorates and agencies have been created. Just to mention a few, these include the following: Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), Cotton Development Organization (CDO), Dairy Development Authority (DDA), Coordinating Office for Control of Trypanosomiasis in Uganda (COCTU), National Agricultural Research Centre (NARO), NAADS, and National Animal Genetic Resources Centre and Data Bank (NAGRC&DB). Acts of Parliament created all of them.

Since the operationalization of the PMA in 2001, several poverty-eradication programs targeting the poor have been implemented,²² ranging from Entandikwa (literally translated as “initial capital”), Kulembeka (“targeted harvest”), Bona ba gagawale (Prosperity for All [PFA]), and NAADS. Most programs were given Luganda names in order to popularize them since Luganda is widely spoken and/or understood beyond the capital. PFA was contained in the NRM manifesto of 2006 and operationalized in 2008. These programs have not been as successful as previously hoped (Tabaro & Katusiimeh, 2018). OWC and the Youth Livelihood Programs are thus just the most recent agricultural programs. The design of the different agricultural policies is framed toward a market-oriented approach, which is about assessing consumer

needs and responding to them accordingly (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990: 3-5).

These programs and policies certainly have effects, despite the chronic underfunding of agricultural policies by the Ugandan government. They are at the same time typical epitomizations of the palimpsest of organizational text production that results from internationalized rule, and that is itself a form of international domination (cf. Morcillo Laiz & Schlichte, 2016). Though meant to address different issues, the promise in all the policies is economic growth, rural development, poverty eradication and income generation for the poor, and transformation of the agriculture sector. The underlining thesis is that modernizing agriculture will contribute to increasing incomes of the poor by raising farm productivity, increasing the share of agricultural production that is marketed, and creating on- and off-farm employment through a vibrant private sector. Nevertheless, the state can intervene at any time if need be. This could be in the form of joined-public sector interventions involving policy adjustments or public sector investments, as well as new public service delivery mechanisms. The implicit contradiction that a modernization of agriculture would inevitably mean a concentration of land property and would set free a growing number of peasants remains unaddressed in these programs.

There is no conclusive evidence about the effects of all these programs and single projects, nor is there any systematic study that would investigate the relative advantages of different policies. Furthermore, other dynamics feed into the crisis of agricultural production: Simultaneously with a growing population and rapidly decreasing farm sizes on average,²³ a transfer of land titles and an enforced land flight²⁴ have become evi-

22 The programs have been characterized by massive embezzlement with very low recovery rates. Often times, people see the programs as a reward for their votes, especially considering that they are often launched around election period.

23 Interview (JAK, KS) with agricultural officers, district administration, October 21, 2019, Eastern District.

24 Loss of land and insufficient income in agriculture is a main driver of labor moving into the cities, according to a conversation (KS) with a group of

dent in Uganda. Conflicts about land rights abound as in many other African countries (cf. Byekwaso, 2019). In particular, around urban settings, land evictions have become widespread and enhanced by weak legal institutions and plural legal orders.²⁵

The process of policymaking in Uganda seems to follow largely the model of project-rule that has been described for humanitarian relief NGOs (cf. Krause, 2014). Interview material collected in the respective ministry, as with other stakeholders, suggests that the ministry acts as an orchestrator at best or even as a loose coordinator of projects that various IOs and NGOs design and carry out with money from external “donors.” The so-called “programs” that are decided upon by the Ugandan government seemingly are often rather shells to be filled with projects funded from elsewhere.

The Ministry of Agriculture itself reportedly engages in “capacity and skills management,” “knowledge generation,” and “information dissemination,” yet its own financial commitment remains “rather elusive” (Namugumya et al., 2020: 365). While a slight increase in policy integration between different ministries is observable on paper (i.e., in planning documents and policy declarations) (Namugumya et al., 2020: 364), various actors would not confirm that there is a concerted effort to tackle nutrition issues with agricultural policies (cf. Namayengo et al., 2018).²⁶ While larger projects and pro-

grams have to refer to Vision 2040 and the respective five-year NDP, no ministry seems to spell out exact policy targets or benchmarks. Nor do agricultural experts always believe in a technocratic transformation of Uganda’s agriculture, as “farmers lack the capital and the skills to reach the goals of commercialization”—what might work for big farms does not apply for the vast majority of small-scale farmers.²⁷ Agricultural policy, with the exception of the OWS (see below), is thus mainly left to external agencies’ initiatives and donor funds, whereas the Ugandan government only provides 3 percent of its budget to the sector, in which 65 percent of its workforce is active.

The fact that evident contradictions of policy plans are not addressed equally applies to the most recent invention of agricultural and food-security policies by the NRM government: OWC. While many of the other programs and policies have to be seen as an outcome of the interaction with international agencies, demanding legal frameworks for their own engagement, OWC is apparently a purely Ugandan-born policy, wearing the traces of the current regime logic of bending public institutions along the needs of creating loyalty in times of decreasing popular support.

boda-boda (motor-bike taxi) drivers, November 29, 2018, Kampala. In poorer regions, the value of surplus product (beyond subsistence needs) per farm would oftentimes not exceed 25 ₤, interview (KS) with occasional worker from Teso, December 13, 2018, Kampala.

25 Interview (KS) with university lecturer in sociology, October 11, 2019, Kampala. Land evictions have become a continuous subject of media reports, see, e.g., “650 Mpigi households face eviction” (Daily Monitor, October 15, 2019); and “Why State House team raided Wakiso land office” (Daily Monitor, December 21, 2018), see also Nahalomo (2015).

26 Districts are only “consulted by ministries,” but

no clear need assessment would be carried out (interview [KS] with representative of Farmers Association, November 26, 2018, Kampala); “ministries’ influence is legible” (interview [KS] with engineer from agro-science NGO, October 14, 2019, Kampala). Some donors, like USAID, avoid cooperation with ministries all together and work directly with local NGOs (interview [KS] with European head of coordination, October 17, 2019, Kampala).

27 Interview (KS) with engineer from agro-science NGO, October 14, 2019, Kampala.

4.1 Excursus II: Operation Wealth Creation

UOWC was created by an Act of Parliament in 2014 after the NAADS Act was repealed on the basis that this extension service had, according to the President's statement, failed to achieve its mandate and instead had become a hub for corruption. OWC now reportedly uses more than half of NAADS's 270 bn Ush (approx. \$70 million) budget.²⁸

OWC can be seen as the latest approach to commercializing agriculture through the transformation of a largely subsistence-oriented agriculture into a more market-oriented and productive sector. The commercialization of agriculture shall create wealth and alleviate poverty among the peasant farmers. OWC's mandate is within the provisions of the various sector policies. It is specifically tasked with providing planting and breeding materials, enhancing agricultural mechanization via the distribution of ox ploughs and tractors, and providing low-cost housing as well as pensions and gratuities for civilian veterans and former national force members. These measures were first carried out in the Luwero area²⁹ in order to compensate veterans of the bush war and should later be rolled out nationwide.

To achieve this, OWC deploys Ugandan military personnel from the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces on the assumption that military personnel are more efficient, organized, and disciplined.³⁰ Accordingly, in a pro-government newspaper, OWC is lauded as a major the most required crops like cereals and pulses (Uganda Parliament 2017), driver of agricultural development (New Vision, December 10, 2018). However, a parlia-

mentary commission of 30 members of parliament from 2017 stated that the delivery of inputs is often late, inappropriate, and of bad quality, whereas extension services were no longer offered. The parliamentarians recommended a serious revision of the policy as it could not work without prior consultation with the local population and would not enhance.

As a response to previous interventions that failed to address societal needs, specifically the NAADS,³¹ the key mandate of OWC has been to provide planting and breeding materials to farmers. Following the officially declared market orientation approach, one would assume that this is done on the basis of knowledge about farmers' interests, needs, abilities, and geographical dynamics of a given region. The OWC paper on operational procedure equally spells out that farm inputs, such as seedlings and animals (heifer cows), should be distributed after conducting needs assessment.³² According to experts and farmers, however, these procedures are not followed. Often, seedlings are supplied during the off-season and without prior needs assessment.³³ Left without a choice, farmers simply took whatever was distributed, not because they wanted it but because it was available. In such instances, they were not keen to practice planting. A district leader in Oyam attested to seeing seedlings germinating under mango trees in

28 "Learning to depend on Salim Saleh, Museveni handouts," *The Observer*, November 14-20, 2018, p. 25.

29 This is the area in which the current government had launched its bush war in the early 1980s, using local resources for survival.

30 Interview (JAK) with OWC soldier, October 18, 2019, Kampala

31 NAADS was launched as part of the broader PMA. It was a paradigm-changing policy shift and a radical move away from a traditional top-down, government-led extension service to a privatized, demand-led one in which farmers were supposed to define their own requirements for advice. It was meant to run for 25 years. For an analysis of NAADS, see Joughin & Mette (2010). A study based on household surveys in 2004 and 2007, though, could not measure an unambiguous effect of NAADS support for farmers (Benin et al., 2012).

32 Interview (JAK) with agricultural research expert, October 17, 2019, Kampala.

33 Interview (JAK), NARO expert, Kampala October 17, 019; Interview (JAK) with Kilimo Trust Tech ass., Kampala, October 17, 2019.

people's homes after farmers refused to plant them.³⁴ A study on the rationale of OWC in Masheruka's town council in the western district of Sheema revealed that farmers were given too much of what they did not request for and nothing or too little of what they requested for (Tabaro & Katusiimeh, 2018: 92).³⁵ Sometimes, seedlings or cassava cuttings were delivered at the district or sub-county premises only for them to be abandoned there as farmers refused to turn up. In an eastern district, respondents claimed that the program officers were only interested in distributing and getting their distribution list filled. The program would lack oversight, follow-up, monitoring, and evaluation tools.³⁶

OWC seemingly is neither coordinated with other interventions in agriculture or food-security policies in general. In an eastern district, respondents reported the presence of other NGOs involved in similar activities, but there was no attempt by OWC to liaise with them. Although it would be easy for OWC officers to get information from the program beneficiaries, this is not the case because of the poor relations with the people. A similar observation was made in Oyam district, which is where district leaders reported a lack of collaboration between OWC officers and district production officers who oversee agricultural issues.³⁷ They stated that

OWC officers' approach was so militant that they even silenced district leaders. Tabaro and Katusiimeh (2018: 97-98) equally observed that people feared the army so much that, during meetings, women in particular would not speak out.

Information dissemination to the farmers and among the different sector departments is another OWC loophole. Selection criteria are unknown to farmers. The information mostly reaches the farmers accidentally or through grapevine structures. Even those in senior positions seemed to have scant information concerning OWC operations. District officers reported that many times they came to the office only to find OWC cars with suppliers demanding that they deliver the supplies to the distribution venues where beneficiaries would have been predetermined. Due to the predetermination of beneficiaries, most respondents perceived it as an NRM reward program.³⁸

Concerning organization-wide responsiveness, OWC's mission is aligned with the goals and objectives of the big sector-wide policies (PEAP, PMA, NAP, and NDP). However, in terms of implementation, there is a mismatch between theory and practice. OWC blamed the problem on the NAADS—its predecessor—for procuring fake products. It is common to hear such comments as "OWC distributed 'cows that practice family planning' or 'the OWC soldiers brought army worms.'" ³⁹ This turned out to be a blame game among the various actors involved.⁴⁰

34 NTVUganda (2017) People's Parliament: The impact of Operation Wealth Creation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1vAv8d04iU>.

35 Such criticism is widespread in Uganda: MPs question the transformational role of OWC, *The Independent*, August 19, 2019; District leaders fault Operation Wealth Creation agro-industrialization program on job creation, *The Independent*, January 24, 2020; Cassava farmers in Pader unhappy with Gen Saleh over unfulfilled promise, *The Independent*, December 26, 2019; 51% of Operation Wealth Creation beneficiaries dissatisfied- Survey, *The Independent*, November 21, 2019.

36 Interviews (JAK, KS) with farmers and district agricultural officers, October 21, 2019, eastern district.

37 NTVUganda (2017) People's Parliament: The impact of Operation Wealth Creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1vAv8d04iU>.

38 Interview (JAK, KS) with Farmers Association representative October 24, 2019, Kampala; interview with university lecturer in social sciences (JAK), October 18, 2019, Kampala.

39 Interview (JAK) with OWC soldier October 18, 2019, Kampala. The expression "army worm" refers to caterpillars of a moth species (*Spodoptera exempta*) that feed on cereals and cause massive harvest damage in the region.

40 Interview (JAK) with OWC soldier October 18, 2019, Kampala; Interview JAK, university lecturer, Kampala, October 17, 2019.

The promise of OWC to contribute to the mechanization of farming has seemingly not been fulfilled. Whereas the Ugandan government and international organizations agree on the importance of this measure (cf. Museveni, 2019; FAO, 2013, Vol. 20), distributions of oxen, ox ploughs, and tractors seem to follow patterns of either vote-buying or patronage or do not coincide with the low level of capitalization of small-scale farmers.

For a start, the programs aimed to allocate two tractors per district but under a cost-cutting approach whereby the farmers contribute fifteen million (approx. US-\$ 4,000). The tractors are managed by the district and hired out to farmers at a subsidized rate. However, Ugandan farmers are mostly peasants depending on subsistence farming with low yields that do not enable them to earn much to raise the required money. Even if this was not the case, there is no clear specification of how many farmers should contribute for one tractor. Besides, there is no regulation that limits public office bearers and politicians from engaging in agriculture. Given these circumstances, it is very easy for power holders to manipulate the system to their own benefit. Such instances have been observed in several districts.⁴¹ For instance, in an eastern district, a district officer decided to pay off all the money and thereafter claimed to own the tractor, thus denying the farmers a chance to be shareholders.⁴² Given the low regulatory system in the country, such people go unpunished. As the respondents noted, most often such people have political godfathers. Other than serving the needs of the farmers, OWC is assumed to serve the interests of those in the corridors of power. Farmers see politicians as people who want to manage everything irrespective of their qualifications. Their involvement in agricultural services is a demoralizing factor

to the professionals who are rendered powerless and/or useless.⁴³

The management of OWC is another issue of contention. OWC is manned by soldiers who do not necessarily have any agricultural knowledge. Respondents saw this as an interference to their professionalism, as expressed in the following extracts:

"OWC was meant to create jobs for redundant soldiers so that they don't overthrow the president" (interview [JAK/KS] with Farmers Association representative, October 21, 2019, eastern district).

"It is to find livelihoods for demobilized generals, make them busy, infiltrate the ministry of agriculture, rob the money, and pretend to help. It is an organization of retired soldiers, just killing the ministry" (interview [JAK] with university lecturer, Kampala, October 11, 2019, Kampala).

"There seems to be a deliberate move to position actors to tap the money from different stages. The same people keep on appearing in different spheres either as experts, suppliers, model farmers, etc." (interview [JAK] with university lecturer, Kampala, October 17, 2019, Kampala).

Finally, since its operationalization in 2014, OWC has not rolled out its services to cover the entire country. Its operations have been restricted to a few places, and beneficiaries have been limited. In terms of the tasks allocated to it, so far only two are under implementation, as discussed above.

In sum, as the most recent agricultural policy, OWC was designed to reduce rural poverty. Thereby, food insecurity seems to be a radicalization of the growing politicization of policymaking for the purpose of securing votes through patronage and vote-buying, which Joughin and Mette (2010) have

41 Focus group discussion (JAK/KS) with Farmers, October 21, 2019, Eastern district.

42 Focus group discussion (JAK/KS) with Farmers, October 21, 2019, Eastern district.

43 Focus group discussion (JAK/KS) with Farmers, October 21, 2019, Eastern district.

observed and that other scholars (Tangri/Mwenda, 2019; Ayeko-Kümmeth, 2015) see at work in additional policy fields as well.

5. UGANDA'S FOOD POLICIES IN THE AGE OF INTERNATIONALIZED RULE

There are certainly many challenges ahead with regard to the future of food and agricultural policies in Uganda. Climate change has seemingly dissolved the old pattern of rainy and dry seasons in the region, the overuse of soil has exhausted its fertility in many areas, population growth will lead to further fragmentation of farms beyond reproducible sizes, and low agricultural growth and the lack of infrastructure seemingly continue to impede both access to input and the marketing of products in many if not most areas of Uganda (Ssewanyana & Kasirye, 2010). The poverty—or, in other words, “undercapitalization”—of farmers seems to be the main reason these difficulties listed weigh so heavy.

Our contribution seems to indicate that there is no simple technological fix to this stalemate or downward spiral, nor does market liberalization seem to be the magic tool to solve the problem. After thirty years of the market liberalization and retreat of the state, the situation in terms of food security has not fundamentally changed in Uganda.

In this paper, we argued that the subsequent constellations in which food insecurity has become an issue in Ugandan history have shown how political the food question ultimately is. The second lesson that we think we can conclude here is that this political nature of the food question is at the same time an international one. The integration into an imperial scheme, as well as the tradeoff between imposed production of cash crops versus food crops, can be seen as the first instance of the internationalized food politics, being part of the British food regime that existed between 1870 and 1930 (cf. McMi-

chael, 2009), in which path decisions for future patterns of world market integration were made.

More promising were the attempts during the period of late colonialism and early independence in which “national development” ultimately became the ruling norm and in which the role of cooperatives in our view indicated a revision of colonial politics, including the empowerment of rural areas. With independence and the drive for Africanization, this tendency continued. The political element of the food question here consisted rather in its subordination under the ideals of national development as an overarching project, even if related policies might look insufficient in retrospect.

Uganda's political history is marked by a long interruption of national development by the period of political decay and civil war (1971-1987). The current regime started out in the late 1980s with an emancipatory agenda and inherited an economy that was thrown back to subsistence levels. In many regards, progress, also in terms of social policy and human development, has been achieved. Increasingly, however, policies seem to be subjected to the creation of regime loyalty for “a patronage-based political machine” (Tripp, 2010: 4). The amount of an estimated \$700 million being dished out during the elections in 2016 to buy votes must be siphoned off from public policy funds (Rubongoya, 2018: 104). Public spending, it seems, is directed more and more by electoral calculation.

In terms of food policies, not much has been achieved over the last ten years. The current government of Uganda follows the pattern of the “third global food regime” (McMichael, 2009), in place since the 1980s, and its features of a supermarket revolution of privileged consumers and millions of slum dwellers. In addition, it has little initiative to really address the needs of a rural population that is threatened by rising food prices, a deteriorating ecological situation lacking alternative employment options. The bifurca-

tion of what used to be public services into a commodified and commercialized wing, as well as a precarious system of non-transformative “charity” in the form of cash transfers to “the most vulnerable” (World Bank, 2008: 3), however, is no answer to the persistent social question that besets Uganda, much like other African countries (cf. Adesina, 2016). We have doubts that the commercialization and mechanization of agriculture will remedy the problems of nutrition and agriculture in Uganda, and with it its rural social question.

Other than pointing to the pertinence of the rural social question, our contribution permits us to hint at a few requirements for research in the social sciences in general, and international relations in particular. First, the trajectory of the food question in Uganda is different from other cases on the continent and from other regions. It highlights how deeply imbricated local and international dynamics are. Neither is reducible to the other. However, it also shows that both colonial and postcolonial governments balanced domestic and external political forces. While imperial politics had an impact on what was done in the protectorate, the leeway of governors was considerable (Elkan, 1961: 51). Conflicts of interest in the colonies impinged on them as much as the Colonial Office. A deeper engagement with the complexity of colonial politics will probably enrich political science tremendously, going beyond easy binary readings (cf. Bayart & Bertrand, 2006). The current situation can be read in a similar manner: As much as the IFI and international market set conditions and constraints for the Ugandan governments, there is still a lot of policy choice left. Reserving three percent of the state’s budget for fostering an economic sector that employs 70 percent of the population is not without its alternatives.

Not the least relevant lesson of our contribution, our second suggestion is to put the question of food on the agenda of international relations again: We hope we could show how relevant it is.

REFERENCES

- Adesina, J. (2016). Inequality in Africa. Dimensions and drivers. In United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *World Social Science Report* (pp. 1-5). Paris: UNESCO.
- Ahimbisibwe, F. (2019). Overview of Cooperatives in Uganda. Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives. Retrieved from <http://www.mtic.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Overview-of-Cooperatives-in-Uganda.pdf>.
- Amin, S. (1972). Underdevelopment and dependence in Black Africa – origins and contemporary forms, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 10(4), 105-120.
- Asiimwe, G. B. (2018). The impact of neoliberal reforms on Uganda’s socio-economic landscape. In J. Wiegatz, G. Martiniello, & E. Greco (Eds.), *Uganda. The Dynamics of Neoliberal Transformation* (pp. 145-162). London: Zed.
- Ayeko-Kümmeth, J. (2015). *The Politics of Public Policy Decisions in Local Government in Uganda* (Doctoral thesis). University of Bayreuth, Faculty of Cultural Studies. Retrieved from <https://epub.uni-bayreuth.de/view/person/Ayeko-K=FCmmeth=3A-Jane=3A=3A.date.html>.
- Bank of Uganda. (1970). *Annual Report 1969/70*. Entebbe: Government Printers.
- Barigaba, J. (2019). Uganda’s labor export new earns it \$1.2 billion. Retrieved April 13, 2021, from <https://www.theeastafican.co.ke/tea/business/uganda-s-labour-export-now-earns-it-1-2-billion--1411248>.
- Bayart, J.-F., & Bertrand, R. (2006). De quel “legs colonial” parle-t-on? *Espirit*, December 2006, 1-27.
- Benin, S., Nkony, E., Okecho, G., & Randriamamonjy, J. (2012). Impact of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (Naads) Program of Uganda: Considering different levels of likely contamination with the treatment. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 94(2), 2386-2392.
- Biecker, S., & Schlichte, K. (2021). A State of Numbers. Bureaucratic Technologies of Government and the Study of Internationalized Politics. In S. Biecker, & K. Schlichte (Eds.), *The Political Anthropology of Internationalized Rule. What IR can learn from social anthropology* (pp. 171-194). London: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Biellik, R. J., & Henderson, P. L. (1981): Mortality, nutritional status, and diet during the famine in Karamoja, Uganda, 1980. *The Lancet*, 12 (2), 1330-1333.
- Bonnecase, V. (2009). Avoir faim en Afrique occidentale française: investigations et représentations coloniales (1920-1960). *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines*, 2(2), 151-174. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rhsh.021.0151>.
- Breman, J., Harris, K., Lee, C. K., & van der Linden, M. (Eds.). (2019). *The Social Question in the Twenty-First Century. A global view*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Buell, R. L. (1928). *The Native Problem in Africa* (2 volumes). New York: Macmillan.
- Büschel, H., & Speich, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Entwicklungswelten. Globalgeschichte der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus.
- Butler, L. J. (1999). Reconstruction, Development and the Entrepreneurial State: The British Colonial Model, 1939-1951. *Contemporary British History*, 13(4), 29-55.
- Byekwaso, N. (2019). Modernization, Poverty, Eradication and the Process of Social Transformation in Uganda. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 51(2), 265-281.
- Byrnes, R. M., & Library of Congress. (1990). *Uganda: A country study*. Washington, D.C: Federal Research Division.
- Cépède, M. (1984). The Fight Against Hunger. Its history on the international agenda. *Food Policy*, 9(4), 282-290.
- Cleave, J. H. (1968). Food Consumption in Uganda. *East African Medical Journal*, 68(1), 70-84.
- Cohen, A. (1959). *British Policy in Changing Africa*. Northwestern University African Studies, no. 2. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Constantine, S. (1984). *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy 1914-1940*. London: Routledge.
- Cooper, F. (1996). *Decolonization and African Society. The labor question in French and British Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Devereux, S. (2016). Social protection for enhanced food security in sub-Saharan Africa. *Food Policy*, 60, 52-62.
- Dimier, V. (2004). On Good Colonial Government: Lessons from the League of Nations. *Global Society*, 18(3), 280-292.
- Doyle, S. (2006). *Crisis & Decline in Bunyoro*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Eckert, A. (2019). From Poverty to Informality? The social question in Africa in a historical perspective. In J. Breman, K. Harris, C. K. Lee, & M. van der Linden (Eds.), *The Social Question in the Twenty-First Century. A global view* (pp. 152-168). Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Ehrlich, C. (1963). Some Social and Economic Implications of Paternalism in Uganda. *Journal of African History*, 4(2), 275-285.
- Elkan, W. (1961). *The Economic Development of Uganda*. London/Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- FAO (2013): *The State of Food and Agriculture 2013*, Rome: FAO.
- FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, & WHO. (2020). *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9692en>.
- Friedmann, H., & McMichael, P. (1989). Agriculture and the state system: the rise and fall of national agricultures, 1870 to the present. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 29(2), 93-117.
- Gahigi, M. K. (2019). *Countries in eastern Africa look to Middle East to employ youth*. Retrieved April 13, 2021, from <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business/countries-in-eastern-africa-look-to-middle-east-to-employ-youth-1423274>.
- Gartrell, B. (1985): British Administrators, colonial chiefs and the comfort of tradition: an example from Uganda. *African Studies Review*, 26(1), 1-24.
- Glasman, J., & Schlichte, K. (2021). *The Historicity of State Formation* (Unpublished manuscript). Welfare services in Uganda and Cameroon.
- Hailey, J. (1938). *An African Survey. A study of problems arising in Africa south of the Sahara*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hansen, H. B. (2013). Uganda in the 1970s: a decade of paradoxes and ambiguities. *Journal of East African Studies*, 7(1), 83-103.
- Ilfie, J. (1987). *The African Poor: a History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Jameson, J. D. (1970). Introduction. In J. D. Jameson (Ed.), *Agriculture in Uganda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jerven, M. (2013). *Poor Numbers. How we are misled by African Development Statistics and What to Do About It*. Ithaca, NJ.: Cornell University Press.
- Joughin, J. & Kjaer, A.M. (2010). The Politics of Agricultural Policy Reform: The Case of Uganda. *Forum for Development Studies*, 37(1), 1-20.
- Joughin, J., & Mette, A. (2010). The Politics of Agricultural Policy Reform: The Case of Uganda. *Forum for Development Studies*, 37(1), 61-78.
- Kasozi, A. B. K. (1994). *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain.
- Kohli, A. K., & Jaworski, B. J. (1990). Market orientation: The Construct, Research Propositions, and Managerial Implications. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 1-18.
- Krause, M. (2014). *The Good Project. Humanitarian relief NGOs and the Fragmentation of Reason*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.
- Lang, T., Barling, D., & Caraher, M. (2001). Food, Social Policy and the Environment: Towards a new model. *Social Policy & Administration*, 35(5), 538-558.
- Lee, J. M. (1967). *Colonial Development and Good Government. A study of ideas expressed by the British Official Classes in planning decolonization 1939-1964*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Leopold, M. (2003). *Inside West Nile. Violence, history and representation on an African frontier*. Kampala: Fountain.
- Little, M. (1991). Imperialism, colonialism and the new science of nutrition: The Tanganyika experience, 1925-1945. *Social Science & Medicine*, 32(1), 11-14.
- Low, D. A. (1971). *The Mind of Buganda. Documents of the modern history of an African kingdom*. London: Heinemann.
- MAAIF [= Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries]. (2016). *National Agricultural Extension Strategy 2016/17-2020/21*. Entebbe: MAAIF.
- MacDonald, A., & Owor, A. (2020). Food Distribution and corona-politics in Uganda: the view from Kampala [Blog post, June 15, 2020]. Retrieved April 13, 2021, from <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2020/06/15/food-distribution-coronapolitics-uganda-lockdown-elections-kampala/>.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2017). A material turn in International Relations: the 4x4, intervention and resistance. *Review of International Studies*, 43(5), 855-874.
- Mamdani, M. (1982): Karamoja: Colonial Roots of Famine in North-East Uganda. *Review of African Political Economy*, 25(9), 66-73.
- McMichael, P. (2009). A Food Regime Genealogy. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 139-169.
- Middleton, J. (1971). Some Effects of Colonial Rule Among the Lugbara of Uganda. In V. Turner (Ed.), *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960*, vol. III (pp. 6-48). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MOFPED [= Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development]. (2018). *Background to the Budget Fiscal Year 2018/19*. Kampala: MOFPED.
- Morcillo Laiz, Á. & Schlichte, K. (2016). Rationality and International Domination: Revisiting Max Weber. *International Political Sociology*, 10(2), 168-184.
- Mugisha, J., Obaa, B. B., Namwanje, D., & Nimusiima, M. (2016). *Examining Success Factors for Sustainable Rural Development through Intergeated Co-operative Model. Uganda Country Research Report*. Kampala, Makerere University, School of Agricultural Sciences.
- Museveni, Y. (2019). Subsistence Farming a disaster for African families, [press release, transcript, August 20, 2019]. The state House of Uganda. Retrieved April 13, 2021 from <http://www.statehouse.go.ug/media/press-releases/2019/08/12/subsistence-farming-disaster-african-families-museveni>.
- Nahalomo, A. (2015). *Land Evictions and the realisation of the right to adequate food in Wakiso and Mpigi districs in central Uganda* (Unpublished M.Sc. thesis). Kampala, Makerere University.
- Namayengo, F. M., Antonides, G., & Cecchi, F. (2018). Microcredit and Food Security: Evidence from Rural Households in Uganda. *Journal of African Economies*, 27(4), 457-482.
- Namugumya, B. S., Candel, J. J. L., Talsma, E., & Termeer, C. J. A. M. (2020). Towards concerted government efforts? Assessing nutrition policy integration in Uganda. *Food Security*, 12(2), 355-368.
- Nelson, R.D. & Kazungu, D. (1973). *An Evaluation of the USAID Extension Project in Uganda*, Morgantown, VA: University of West Virginia, Office of International Programs.

- NTV Uganda. (2017). People's Parliament: The impact of Operation Wealth Creation [Video file, September 23, 2012]. Retrieved April 13, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1vAv8d04iU>.
- Nyeko, M. (1998). *Strategies for household food availability in Pawkelo village, Gulu district* (Unpublished B.A. thesis). Kampala, Makerere University.
- Obwona, M., Shinyekwa, I., & Kiiza, J. (2014). *The Evolution of Industry in Uganda, "Learning to Compete"*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution/United Nations University.
- Ouedraogo, A. N., & Schlichte, K. (2021). Food Policy and State Formation in Senegal and Uganda. *Global Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2021.1924632>.
- Parker, G. G. (1952): British Policy and Native Agriculture in Kenya and Uganda. *Agricultural History*, 26(4), 125-131.
- Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1967). *Regulating the Poor. The functions of public welfare*. London: Tavistock.
- Riches, G., & Silvasti, T. (Eds.). (2014). *First World Hunger Revisited. Food Charity or the Right to Food?* (2nd edition). Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Rist, Gilbert (1997). *The History of Development: From Western origins to global faith*. London: Zed.
- Robins, J. E. (2018). 'Food comes First': The Development of Colonial Nutrition Policy in Ghana, 1900-1950. *Global Food History*, 4(2), 168-188.
- Rubongoya, J. B. (2018). 'Movement legacy' and neoliberalism as political settlement in Uganda's political economy. In J. Wiegatz, G. Martiniello, & E. Greco (Eds.), *Uganda. The Dynamics of Neoliberal Transformation* (pp. 95-110). London: Zed.
- Sande Lie, Jon Harald (2015). *Developmentality. An ethnography of the World Bank-Uganda partnership*. New York: Berghahn.
- Schlichte, K. (2008). Uganda, or: the internationalisation of rule. *Civil Wars*, 10(4), 369-383.
- Schlichte, K. (2021). Trajectories of Taxation in Uganda and Senegal. In P. Genschel, & L. Seelkopf (Eds.), *Global Taxation. How modern taxes conquered the world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.
- Schultheis, M. J. (1975). The Ugandan Economy and General Amin, 1971-1974. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 10(3), 3-34.
- Sen, A. (1982). The Food Problem: Theory and Policy. *Third World Quarterly*, 4(3), 447-459.
- Ssewanyana, S., & Kasirye, I. (2010). *Food Insecurity in Uganda: a dilemma to achieving the Hunger Millennium Development Goal*. Kampala, Economic Research Centre, Research Series No. 70.
- Tabaro, R., & Katusiimeh, M. (2018): Public Sector Provision of Free Agricultural Inputs in Uganda: The rationale and challenges of Operation Wealth Creation Programme. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 8(2), 83-103.
- Tangri, R., & Mwenda, A. M. (2019). Change and Continuity in the Politics of Government – Business Relations in Museveni's Uganda. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 13(4), 678-697.
- Thompson, G. (2003). *Governing Uganda. British colonial rule and its legacy*. Kampala: Fountain.
- Tripp, A. M. (2010). *Museveni's Uganda. Paradoxes of power in a hybrid regime*. Boulder Col: Lynne Rienner
- Uchendu, V. C., & Anthony, K. R. M. (1975). *Agricultural Change in Teso District, Uganda, a study of economic, cultural and technical determinants of rural development*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.
- UBOS [= Uganda Bureau of Statistics]. (2017). *Statistical Abstract 2017*. Kampala: UBOS.
- UBOS [= Uganda Bureau of Statistics]. (2019). *Statistical Abstract 2019*. Kampala: UBOS. Retrieved from https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/01_20202019_Statistical_Abstract_-Final.pdf.
- Uganda Government. (1963). Annual Report of the Agricultural Department for the Year ended 31st December 1962. Published by Authority.
- Uganda Parliament. (2017). *Report of the Sectoral Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries on the Implementation for the Operation Wealth Creation Program in Uganda*. Kampala, Office of the Clerk to Parliament: Uganda Parliament.
- Uganda Protectorate. (1958). Department of Agriculture, Annual Report for the Year ended 31st December 1957. Entebbe.

- UNA [= Uganda National Archive]. (N. d). *Uganda in 1914*. Retrieved April 13, 2021, from <https://livelb.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/a-global-view/africa/uganda/>.
- Vail, D. J. (1972). *A history of agricultural innovation and development in Teso district, Uganda*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University.
- Veit, A., Karadag, R., & Schlichte, K. (2017). The Social Question and State Formation in British Africa. *European Journal of Sociology*, 58(2), 237-264.
- Vincent, J. (1989). Contours of Change: Agrarian Law in Colonial Uganda. In J. Starr, & J. F. Collier (Eds.), *History and Power in the Study of Law: New Directions in Legal Anthropology* (pp. 153-167). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Watson, T. Y. (1954). *Report of the Agricultural Productivity Committee*. Entebbe: Government Publisher.
- Wehler, H. U. (1995). *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Dritter Band: Von der 'Deutschen Doppelrevolution' bis zum Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges, 1849-1914*. München: Beck.
- Wicker, E. R. (1958). Colonial Development and Welfare, 1929-1957: The Evolution of a Policy. *Social and Economic Studies*, 7(4), 170-192.
- Wiegratz, J., Martiniello, G., & Greco, E. (2018). Introduction: interpreting change in neoliberal Uganda. In J. Wiegratz, G. Martiniello, & E. Greco (Eds.), *Uganda. The Dynamics of Neoliberal Transformation* (pp. 1-42). London: Zed.
- Wolkenhauer, A. (2021). International Organizations and Food: Nearing the End of the Lean Season? In K. Martens, D. Niemann, & A. Kaasch (Eds.) *International Organizations in Global Social Policy* (pp. 297-321). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- World Bank. (2008). *Rising Food Prices: Policy options and World Bank response*. Washington, D.C., World Bank Group. Retrieved from <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/990671468313502111/pdf/432250BR0SecM-211081020080Box327353B.pdf>.
- World Bank. (2017). *Accelerating Uganda's Development: Ending child marriage, educating girls*. Uganda's Economic Update, 10th edition. Washington, D.C., World Bank Group.
- World Bank (2021). *Trade Summary for Uganda, World Integrated Trade Solution*. Retrieved April 13, 2021 from <https://wits.worldbank.org/countrysnapshot/en/UGA/textview>.
- Young, C., Sherman, N. P., & Rose, T. H. (1981). *Co-operatives & Development. Agricultural politics in Ghana and Uganda*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press.

List of interviews and structured conversations

Due to the sensitivity of the subject and uncertainty of personal consequences for interlocutors, all single first names given are fictitious. Full names indicate real persons who were aware of the purpose of interviews and conversations

KS INTERVIEWS

2018

- *James, 42 ys., Ugandan sociologist, Berlin, September 17, 2018
- Bisaso, 45 ys., entrepreneur, construction, Kampala, November 2, 2018
- *Jeanny, Ugandan project officer of western development agency, November and December, 2018
- *Sahra, 28 ys., journalist, public TV, November 8, 2018
- *Sherin, 35 ys., medical doctor, Kampala, November 8, 2018 (conversation)
- Fred Mutebi-Golooba, political scientist and consultant, Mukono, November 9, 2018
- *Charles, 26 ys., plumber, Kampala, November 10, 2018
- *Andrew, 44 ys., entrepreneur, Kampala, November 10, 2018
- Richard, 28 ys., electrician, Kampala, November 11, 2018
- *Yazidi, 40 ys., trade union officer, November 14, 2018
- *Charles, 45 ys., officer of an IO field office, Kampala, November 14, 2018
- *Herman, 52 ys., lecturer and researcher Makerere and Mulago Medical School, November 16, 2018
- *Bertha, 36 ys., worker in a packaging factory, Kampala, mid-November (several conversations)
- *Margret, 42 ys., commissioner, Ministry of Health, Kampala, November 19, 2018
- *Tom, 45 ys., assistant commissioner, Ministry of Health, Kampala, November 19, 2018
- *George, 56 ys., consultant, ex-ministry of local government, Kampala, November 21, 2018
- Nelson, 50 ys., sub-commissioner, Ministry of Education and Sport, Kampala, November 22, 2018
- Humphrey Mutaasa, 35 ys., agricultural scientist, Uganda National Farmers Association, Kampala, November 27, 2018
- Anthony Mbonye, 52 ys., professor at School of Public Health, MUK, former director general, Ministry of Health, Kampala, December 2, 2018
- Opolot, 24 ys., boda-boda driver, various conversations, Kampala, November-December 2018

- *Ria, 49 ys., TV journalist, Kampala, November 30, 2018 (multiple conversations on all kinds of subjects)
- *Oscar, 42 ys., entrepreneur, fuel logistics, Kampala, December 8, 2018 (conversation)
- *Peter, assistant professor, Makerere University, Kampala, December 9, 2018 (conversation)
- *Adam, 60 ys., permanent secretary of state, Kampala, December 9, 2018 (conversation)
- *Brian, 18 ys., secondary school, Kampala, December 13, 2018 (conversations)
- *Gilbert, 40 ys., entrepreneur, Kampala, December 14, 2018 (conversation)
- *Ida, 22 ys., student in western district, December 16, 2018 (conversation)
- Anthony 60 ys., admin. director, private hospital, western district, December 17, 2018 (interview)
- *Herbert, 40 ys., farmer and LC 1, western district, December 20, 2018 (conversation).

2019 (KS) * = NAME INVENTED

- *Timothy, senior engineer, ca. 40 ys., Kampala, October 8, 2019, Kampala
- *Lydia, 40 ys., agro-entrepreneur, German-Ugandan, October 9, 2019, Kampala
- *Nicodemus, 24 ys., accountant in private company, October 9, 2019, Kampala
- *Iryn, student, 23 ys., October 9, 2019, Kampala
- *James, 44 ys., lecturer, social sciences, Makerere University, October 11, 2019
- *George, 62 ys., former officer Ministry of Local Government, October 12, 2019
- Yonah Kanyomozi, 75 ys., former minister of cooperatives, Obote-II cabinet, member of National Resistance Council 1989-96; ex-ADB; ex-PWC, ... October 14, 2019
- *Beatrice, 35 ys., Kenyan, nutritionist, international NGO in agriculture, Kampala, October 15, 2019
- *Sylvie, 42 ys., Western Embassy, Development Section, October 17, 2019
- Prof. Solomon Assimwe, Nkumba University, Kampala, October 18, 2019
- *Adam, police commissioner, October 19, 2019
- *George, councilor, LC 5, eastern district, October 20, 2019 (several conversations)
- *Martin, deputy chief of administration, eastern district, October 21, 2019
- *Bodo, agricultural officer, eastern district, October 21, 2019 (including focus-group interview with agricultural assistants)
- * Edith, Farmers Association representative, eastern district, October 21, 2019 (including focus-group interview with farmers, same day and town).

Humphrey Mutaasa, Federation of Ugandan Farmers Association, Kampala, October 24, 2019

Fred Manyanja, commissioner of agricultural planning, MAAIF (with Jane Ayeko), later coming: statistician, Entebbe, October 25, 2019

Prof. Wilson Muyinda Mande, vice dean, Nkumba University, Entebbe, October 25, 2019

JAK INTERVIEWS

*Samuel Mugarura, Famine Early Warning Systems Network, Kampala, October 17, 2019

*Sanyu, KILIMO Trust, Kampala, October 17, 2019

*Grace, KILIMO Trust, Kampala, October 17, 2019

Asea Godfrey, executive director, National Agricultural Research Organisation, Kampala, October 18

David Luwandagga-Kaye, Farm Gain, Kampala, October 18, 2019

*Gideon, associate professor, Makerere University, Kampala, October 18, 2019

General Charles Angina, Coordinator, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) Kampala, October 18, 2019

*Charles, police officer, front desk UN FAO; Kampala, October 28, 2019

*Lydia, press officer, UN FAO Kampala, October 2019

