

SMERU report

Beyond Stunting

John F McCarthy
Crawford School
Australian National University



Beyond Stunting

- Paradoxical Progress
- Why: causality
- Covid-19
- Threat to SDG 2
- Solutions....



Food & nutritional insecurity

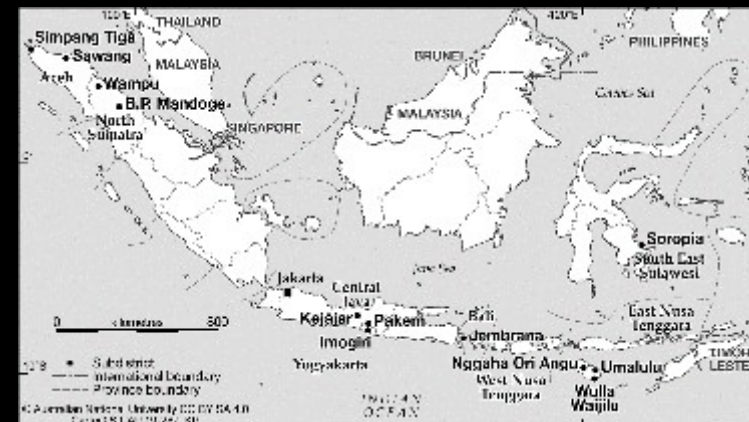
- Wicked problem
 - health, poverty, agriculture, environment
 - Casual relations are numerous, inter-related and difficult to untangle
 - Suggest multidisciplinary approach
- Dissonance between scholarly communities → 'specialist pathways' (Pritchard, 2016)
- What might a sociology of development /anthropology lens suggest?

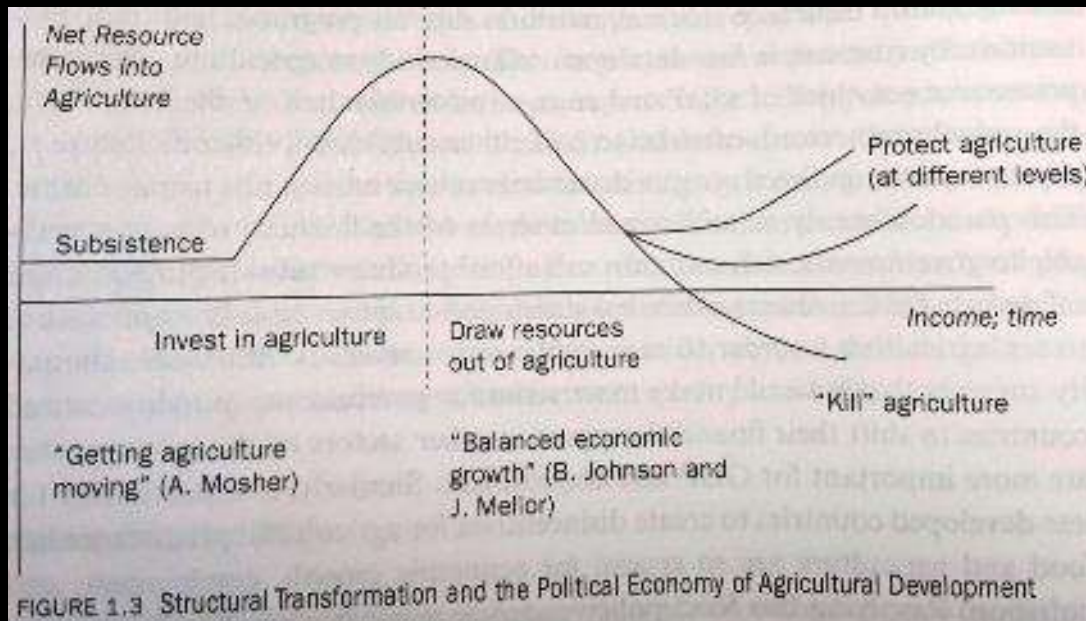
A top-down view of a white bowl filled with yogurt, topped with a variety of fresh fruits including raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, green grapes, and red grapes, along with sliced almonds, cashews, and walnuts. The image is dimly lit, with a dark overlay on the left side where the text is placed.

Causality

- 'nutritional outcomes are shaped by the specific intersections between food systems and processes of social and economic change'. (Pritchard 2017)

- "Poverty is highly correlated with food insecurity. ... smallholder farmers, farmworkers and fishers who constitute the bulk of those who suffer most from hunger "
- "the variation across regions remains huge" (Arief et al)
- is it one phenomenon? One size fits all?
- search for reasons in key livelihood landscapes; agrarian change dynamics
- Nutrition transition; livelihood transition?





Naylor et al 2014

The conventional narrative

- Increase agricultural productivity → incomes → less poverty and food insecurity → many leave agriculture
- Pathways problematic; Integration for many: precarious; adverse terms
- Different contexts → vulnerable for different reasons → different solutions

Broad trajectories; diverse logics

1. intensifying production or moving out of agriculture or migrating to the city
2. 'moving sideways'
 - combine limited agriculture and labour opportunities ; collection of products from nature, reciprocity, remittances etc.
 - Getting by, even progressing in terms of statistical proxies used to measure poverty;
 - remaining insecure: cutting back over periods of the year → stunting
3. Chronically poor: female headed households, tenant farmers, landless & old; disabled



- Progressing crabwise

→ why carbohydrates
continue to dominate?
“Nutrition transition”



- Nature of poverty has changed
- Loss of subsistence capacity → commodified livelihoods
- Consumptive lifestyles
- Retail Penetration ; marketing
- shifting social needs
- Changing food cultures
- Scarcity seasons
- cruel trade-offs: substitute proteins & vegetables (cheap calories)
- Ecological decline
- New approaches?

See McCarthy (2020) The paradox of progressing sideways: food poverty and livelihood change in the rice lands of outer island Indonesia The Journal of Peasant Studies 47(5)

“overhaul of the entire food system”

- Diversification of diets & livelihoods → critical: how?
- Climate?
- Keep in view the asset base of rural communities (subsistence capacity): LSLAs? Pro smallholder policy setting?
- Contract farming? integration on adverse terms?
- Lack of awareness?; regulation of retailing & marketing/advertising
- Fixing SPPs updating/targeting: how? Implementation or design? Capacity of the state to cushion?

“overhaul of the entire food system”

Conclusions....

Food policies → integrated into broader strategies of social policy and economic development.

No one size fits all: Address mechanisms in production systems & rural contexts?

Developing regional responses that build on local institutions & knowledges; How do people cope? Externally initiated adaption responses?

Terima Kasih

