

## Hunger, Famine and the Space of Vulnerability<sup>1)</sup>

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*We may think of the space of death as a wide space whose breadth offers positions of advance as well as those of extinction (Michael Taussig 1984, p. 469).*

In this paper we wish to explore, in theoretical terms, the inter-relations between poverty, hunger and famine. In particular we argue that the locally and historically specific configuration of poverty, hunger and famine defines what we call a *space of vulnerability*, and it is one of our intentions to provide the theoretical means by which this space can be mapped with respect to its social, political, economic and structural-historical co-ordinates. Drèze and Sen (1989) in their important book *Hunger and Public Action* address the poverty-hunger equation but have done so primarily in terms of command over food. In their view, famine and hunger are defined by entitlement collapse and the socially circumscribed distribution of entitlements over basic necessities. Each demands specific forms of state action, namely *entitlement protection* to ensure that the vulnerable do not experience an entitlement collapse for food (viz., famine), and *entitlement promotion* to expand the social basis of the command over necessities (viz., social security) [1989, p. 262]. While Drèze and Sen see entitlements in a wide sense to embrace not only food intake (biology) but access to health care and education (the social environment) – that is to say the broader domain of wellbeing and advantage – they have less to say about what they call “capability” and the “totality of rights” which secure basic needs. In our view entitlements have to

be radically extended not simply in a social or class sense but also politically and structurally.

A famine analysis based on entitlements, if it is to be more than a conjunctural analysis (Patnaik 1991), must account for:

- (i) the particular distribution of entitlements and how they are reproduced in specific circumstances,
- (ii) the larger canvas of rights by which entitlements are defined, fought over, contested, and won and lost (ie empowerment or enfranchisement), and
- (iii) the structural properties (what we shall call crisis proneness) of the political economy which precipitates entitlement crises.

The totality of these processes define the space, a sort of social map, of vulnerability.

### I Vulnerability and Poverty

It is mainly the poor who suffer from famine, hunger and malnutrition (Hunger 1992). But not all poor people are equally vulnerable to hunger; indeed it is not necessarily the poorest who face the greatest risk (Swift 1989; Bohle et al. 1991). In addition to income, there are a multiplicity of other factors that co-determine whether an individual will go hungry; in fact, this is the heart of Sen's (1981) notion of different commodity bundles. The processes which endeavor to account for why some rather than others are more likely to experience hunger or

starvation, define what is typically referred to in the literature as vulnerability (Downing 1991). Poor people are usually among the most vulnerable by definition, but a nuanced understanding of vulnerability rests on a careful disaggregation of the structure of poverty itself (Swift 1989, p. 8; Curtis et al. 1988), and it is precisely this deconstruction of poverty which constitutes a critical starting point for this paper.

We seek to review some of the new work on hunger, starting from the proposition that vulnerability reduction may be as fundamental an objective as reducing poverty and indeed may be easier to achieve (Chambers 1989, p. 5; Kent 1991). Unlike poverty, however, vulnerability as a concept does not rest on a well developed theory; neither is it associated with widely accepted indicators or methods of measurement. The most fully elaborated discussion of vulnerability, however, is provided by Chambers (1989) who starts from the properties of the system – in this case the food system – which give rise to vulnerability, rather than the specific empirical forms which they assume. He defines vulnerability as:

the exposure to contingencies and stress, and difficulty coping with them. Vulnerability has thus two sides: an external side of risks, *shocks and stress* to which an individual or household is subject; and an internal side which is defencelessness, meaning a lack of *means* to cope without damaging loss (1989, p. 1, emphasis added).

This definition suggests three basic co-ordinates of vulnerability:

1. The risk of exposure to crises, stress and shocks,
2. The risk of inadequate capacities to cope with stress, crises and shocks,
3. The risk of severe consequences of, and the attendant risks of slow or limited recovery (resiliency) from crises, risk and shocks.

From this vantage point, the most vulnerable individuals, groups, classes and regions are those most exposed to perturbations, who possess the most limited coping capability, who suffer the most from crisis impact and who are endowed with the most circumscribed capacity for recovery. Vulnerability can be, in other words, defined in terms of *exposure, capacity and potentiality*. Accordingly, the prescriptive and normative response to vulnerability is to reduce exposure, enhance coping capacity, strengthen recovery potential and bolster damage control (ie minimize destructive consequences) via private and public means.

## II The Causal Structure of Vulnerability

What are the conditions and factors which govern vulnerability and which define the specific coordinates of exposure, capacity and potentiality? This is a complex question and has been addressed from a multitude of

vantage points and at many scales of analysis. Vulnerability has been discussed in ecological terms (Liverman 1990), in relation to political economy and class structure (Susman et al. 1984), and as a reflection of social relations including ethnicity, caste, generation and gender (Harriss et al. 1990; Kent 1991). Alternatively, vulnerability can be expressed spatially – from the local to the regional to the transnational – and temporally as a long-term structural baseline (Downing 1991) and as a short-term conjunctural condition (Offe 1984). Whatever the particularities of these different approaches, vulnerability is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional social space defined by the determinate political, economic and institutional capabilities of people in specific places at specific times. In this sense a theory of vulnerability should be capable of mapping the historically and socially specific realms of choice and constraint – the degrees of freedom as it were – which determine exposure, capacity and potentiality. In a narrow sense this is about individual command over basic necessities; in a wider sense it should identify the totality of individual rights and social entitlements. And in a still broader sense it should also speak to the structural properties of the political economy itself.

We have identified three broad approaches to vulnerability which, from different vantage points, shed light on the multi-dimensional space of vulnerability. They will serve as the building blocks for our treatment of the causal structure of vulnerability which we elaborate in section III.

### Entitlement and Capability

Since the publication of Sen's classic treatise *Poverty and Famines* (1981), entitlement approaches have primarily addressed the conditions under which food insecurity collapses into mass starvation, and in this sense it endeavors to provide a theory of famine causation. A person must necessarily starve if his/her entitlement set does not include a commodity bundle with enough food; a person is reduced to starvation if his/her endowment or exchange entitlement makes it no longer possible to acquire a commodity bundle with sufficient food (Sen 1990, p. 37). While Sen employs the term in a variety of ways (legal, economic and political) and of varying degrees of scope (from narrow juridical definitions to broader senses of capability and totality of rights, cf. Gore 1990), the entitlement approach has been used, with great effect, in explaining severe food crises in which there was no significant decline in total food availability but rather a radical shift in entitlements (see de Waal 1989; Shepherd 1988; Drèze and Sen 1989).

In the entitlement lexicon, vulnerability can be defined as the risks associated with the threat of large-scale entitlement deprivation (Sen 1990, p. 37). These shifts are frequently posed as a function of market perturbations, with a particular emphasis on rural land, labour and commodity markets. Persons at risk in imperfect and

fluctuating markets, and who suffer from various forms of price scissors (Swift 1989; Bernstein et al. 1990), are, collectively, the most vulnerable social groups. These market-based analyses (Ravallion 1987) typically define occupational groupings such as landless labourers, informal sector workers, artisans, pastoralists and service-people as vulnerable, most notably in the historical epoch during and after the appearance of a class of wage labourers and prior to the development of a social security system (Sen 1981, p. 73).

Entitlement theory logically embraces two related approaches to hunger: food security and coping strategy models on the one hand (Alamgir and Arora 1991; Newman 1990; Corbett 1988; Mortimore 1989, 1991; de Garine and Harrison 1988), and social welfare/social security theories on the other (von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1988; Hirtz forthcoming; MacPherson and Midgley 1987; Ahmad et al. 1991). In the former, food security is rooted in food availability at different social and spatial scales – Alamgir and Arora refer to individual, household, subnational, national and global food availability, while Kates and Millman (1990, pp. 11–12) distinguish between different hunger situations, namely food shortage (spatial), food poverty (household minima) and food deprivation (individual inadequacy). In the social welfare literature, the object of analysis is social security and welfare which unites the concerns of lawyers, economists and policy analysts with the worlds of economic and legal anthropology. In view of the relative weakness and incapacity of the state in developing countries (in fiscal, political and administrative senses), the emphasis is on local forms of assistance and welfare – what von Benda-Beckmann et al. (1988) refer to as “between kinship and the state”. The informal social security system operates through complex forms of familial, social structural and community institutions; collectively they represent a sort of moral economy (Scott 1976) – though it remains an empirical question as regards whether, and under what conditions, these social entitlements can be functionally adequate (Swift 1989; Vaughn 1987; Chen, 1991). Public action of various sorts can be, as Drèze and Sen (1989) note, critical in both famine prevention (entitlement protection) and social security (entitlement promotion), but in the context of Third World poverty and resource scarcity, the social welfare approach focuses on the complementarities and tensions between state and nonstate social security laws and forms of distribution.

From an expanded entitlement perspective, vulnerability is thus a socio-economic space which is delineated by three domains: market perturbations (economic exchange), coping thresholds (socio-economics of resilience) and social security limitations (informal “moral economies” or formal welfare institutions). Vulnerability delimits those groups of society who are most exposed to market failures, whose coping capacity with respect to unfavorable terms of exchange is low and who are insufficiently integrated into social security arrangements.

## Empowerment and Enfranchisement

The heart of empowerment approaches to vulnerability is politics and a theory of power<sup>2</sup>. Vulnerability can be defined, in this view, as a political space and as a lack of rights broadly understood (and hence there is a linkage with Sen’s discussion of the totality of rights, which undergird food security). Property rights ensure access to land and other assets, but political rights are also central to the process by which claims can be made over public resources as a basis for food security, and to maintain and defend entitlements. In this context, hunger is a massive violation of the most basic human rights; hunger is a sort of silent – and sometimes quite noisy – violence imposed on the powerless. In a normative sense, a reduction of vulnerability demands a promotion of entitlements as Drèze and Sen (1989) suggest, but such an enhancement is *prima facie* political and can only be meaningfully understood as an exercise of political power. As a political space, vulnerability is inscribed in three domains: the domestic (patriarchal and generational politics), work (production politics) and the public sphere (state politics). Accordingly, vulnerability delimits those groups of society which collectively are denied critical rights within and between these political domains. Mead Cain (1983), for example, identifies two fundamental realms of risk in rural Bangladesh. One is patriarchal, expressed through gender-based differences in wage rates and access to and control over resources; the other is rooted in property rights, and specifically the difficulty for the rural peasantry to enforce and defend their property rights against rapacious local landlords and corrupt representatives of the state (Chen 1991).

Powerlessness can, therefore, be approached at a multiplicity of levels as we saw in the discussion of entitlement and food security; intra-household rule-governed inequities over access to resources and property rights, village level stratification and processes of political inclusion and exclusion with respect to land or access to local credit, national level power in which, for example, armed conflicts employ food as a political weapon (Harriss 1989), and global powerlessness in relation to the “international food order” (Friedmann 1990) and the social burdens imposed by structural adjustment and stabilization programs of the World Bank and the IMF (Bohle et al. 1990).

There are several bodies of research which are relevant to a fully elaborated notion of empowerment and vulnerability. The first is the concept of enfranchisement, employed by Appadurai (1984, p. 481). In his view, enfranchisement refers to the “degree to which an individual or a group can legitimately participate in the decisions of a given society about entitlement” (p. 481). Accordingly, in much of South Asia, vulnerability is the space of partial enfranchisement without secure entitlement. The demise of something like a moral economy in rural South Asia marked, for Appadurai, a shift from a relatively secure entitlement to a minimum level of

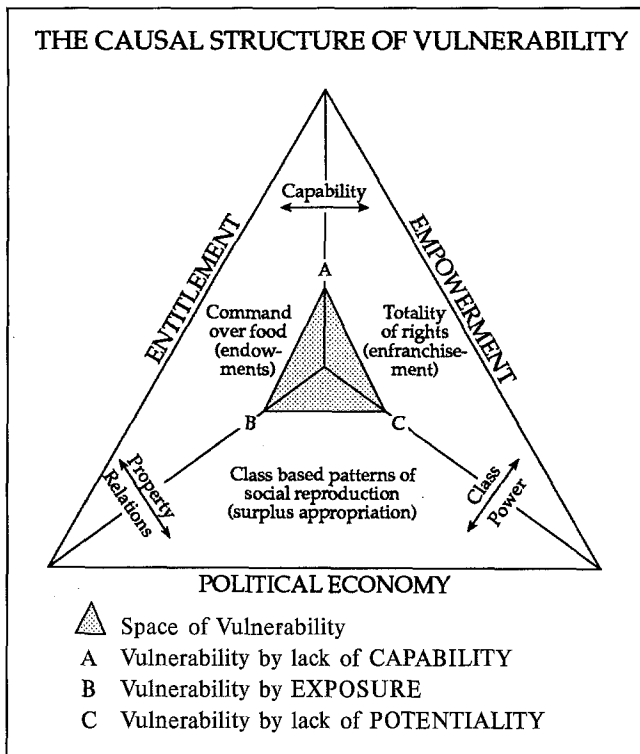


Fig 1 The causal structure of vulnerability

food (a subsistence ethic as Scott (1976) calls it) to partial enfranchisement (the gradual displacement of patronage and the exercise of limited voting rights) without food security. Political exclusion from the process of entitlement distribution and enforcement is therefore central.

Second, work on radical Basic Needs (Wisner 1990) and on "social entitlements" (Shepherd 1988) draws upon some of the insights from social security and entitlement research but emphasizes the political dimensions of command over food, that is to say the political capabilities of the rural and urban poor to organize around food issues. The central idea here is what Mamdani calls the "creativity of popular activity" (1986, p. 49) which sees the political energies within civil society as necessary preconditions for an equitable and effective program of entitlement protection and promotion (what Drèze and Sen (1989) call "support-led security").

The third body of work is what we call the new agrarian studies (Berry 1989; Bardhan 1990). While much of this literature is not addressing vulnerability or hunger per se, it seeks to analyse the means by which local institutions regulate access to and control over resources and how cultural and symbolic contestation and negotiation cross cut, in extremely complex ways, productive activity in risky environments. The central concern here is how rights are made and remade, contested and legitimated through so-called "traditional institutions," (chieftaincy, lineages, church organizations) to secure production ("security") in a risky and uncertain environment<sup>3</sup>.

## Class and Crisis

Central to the class-based analyses of famine are at least three basic propositions (Watts 1983, 1991; Susman et al. 1984; Torry 1986). First, that the social relations of production are historically specific. Second, that the historical character of the ways in which surpluses are appropriated and distributed provide a basis to distinguish the broad character of political economies as modes of production (recognizing that a capitalist mode of production as an abstraction, for example, always assumes specific institutional forms as actually existing capitalisms; Bohle 1986; Harriss 1982). And third, that political economies (ie specific regimes of accumulation within peripheral capitalism) have their own crisis tendencies seen as "market failures" or crises of overproduction for example. Generally speaking, these crisis tendencies arise under capitalism as a result of structural contradictions and conflicts between classes, between the relations and forces of production, and between accumulation and production conditions (Harvey 1982; O'Connor 1988). These three propositions are relevant to the study of famine and hunger insofar as they represent the structural preconditions which shape the famine process. Political economy, in other words, privileges the historical and the structural, attempting to account for how and why particular patterns of entitlement and empowerment are produced and reproduced in society. The processes by which hunger becomes famine reflect a short-term expression of larger crisis tendencies and conflicts within the political economy.

In class analyses of hunger, mass poverty is often associated with two fundamental aspects of modernization: commercialization and proletarianization. Here the concern is with the social form in which the market develops and the historically specific way in which a wage earning class is produced (Bush 1988; Watts 1983; Patnaik 1991). Spitz (1980) has explored these issues in India in terms of the shift from self-provisioning to the market, and how food security resides in the tensions between centripetal and centrifugal forces within the local food economy. The market and the formation of a wage laboring class can, in sum, produce vulnerability during periods of transition. Vulnerability is here understood not solely in terms of entitlement or empowerment (though both are implicit), but rather as an expression of what we referred to earlier as capacity, specifically class capacity defined by the social relations of production in which individuals and households participate. In the class perspective, famine and hunger are poverty problems but this requires an understanding not simply of assets but of the relations by which surpluses are mobilized and appropriated. Famine becomes, in other words, a historically localized expression of fundamental class processes, an idea with obvious links to Sen's (1981) entitlement theory insofar as he refers to specific sorts of famines ("boom" and "slump" famines) whose character is rooted in what he refers to, in passing, as the "mode of production"<sup>4</sup>.

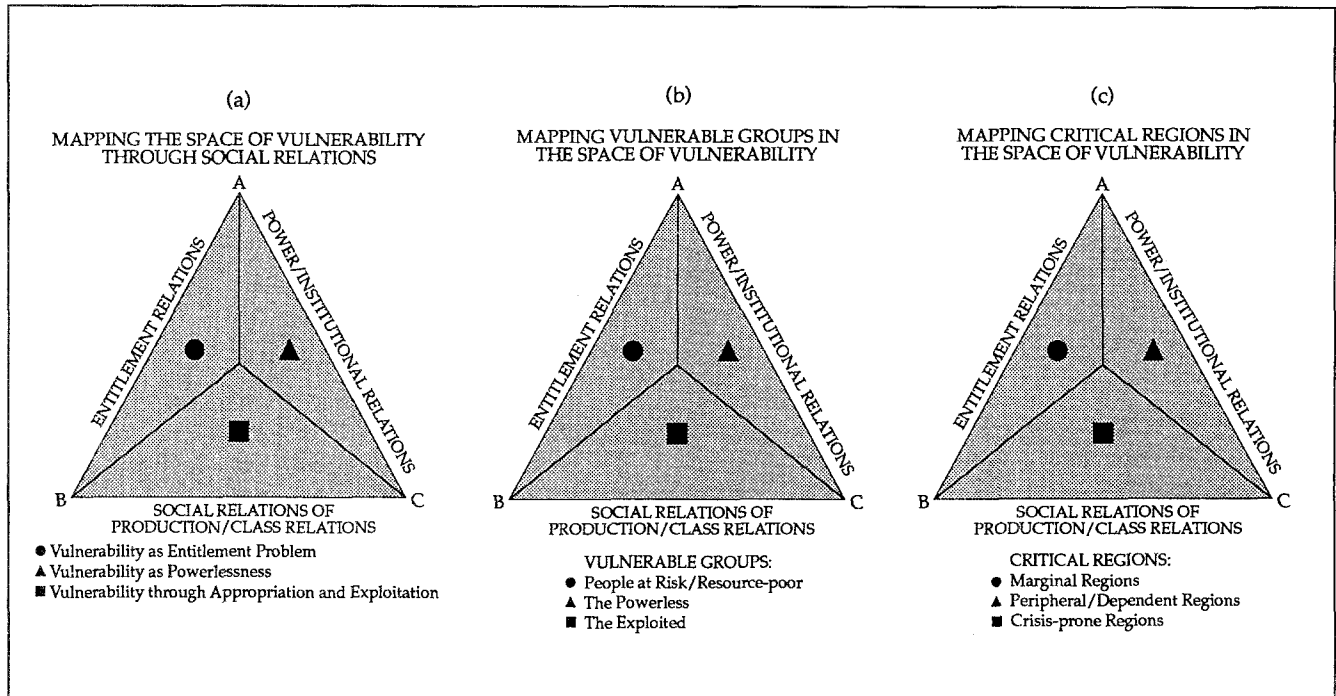


Fig 2 a-c The social space of vulnerability

It is the great strength of a rigorously class-based political economy that it provides a class map on which historically specific processes of surplus appropriation and accumulation (Patnaik 1991), and the corresponding configurations of crisis, conflicts and contradictions can be located. Vulnerability is thus a structural-historical space which is shaped by the effects of commercialization, proletarianization and marginalization.

### The Space of Vulnerability: A Causal Structure

In our view, the space of vulnerability is defined by three distinctive processes which are theoretically derived, and which constitute in tandem a causal structure of hunger (Fig 1). In shorthand form, we identify this tripartite structure – the three sides of our analytical triangle – as *entitlement*, *empowerment* and *political economy*. As our prior review of these processes have made clear, each can only be grasped relationally – as congeries of social relations – and hence each point of triangulation represents a network of ideas, a broad and complex literature which often carries important complementarities and areas of overlap with the other two co-ordinates. Our tripartite causal structure defines the space of vulnerability through the intersection of three causal powers: command over food (*entitlement*), state-civil society relations seen in

political and institutional terms (*enfranchisement/empowerment*), and the structural-historical form of class relations within a specific political economy (surplus appropriation/crisis proneness). In Fig 1, we suggest that the intersection of these causal powers produces three parallel analytical concepts which are central to our explanation of famine and deprivation: economic capability, property relations, and class power. Economic capability emerges from particular configurations of entitlement and empowerment, property relations from the intersection of entitlement and political economy, and class power from specific forms of political economy and empowerment. These three concepts mirror the terms employed by Chambers (1989) in his definition of vulnerability. In other words, our causal structure of hunger, economic capability, property relations and class power can be used as synonyms for what we referred to previously as potentiality, exposure and capacity. They are the three axes about which the space of vulnerability rotates.

Having delineated the space of vulnerability through three basic mechanisms, we can now turn to its *internal* structure (its architecture so to speak) and to locate vulnerable groups and regions with respect to its specific economic, political and structural/historical co-ordinates. The concept of vulnerability is fundamentally relational – this is precisely the central idea behind “disaggregating poverty, (Swift 1989, p. 8) – and hence the space and shape

Crisis Concept	Conception of Food Crisis	Causal Variables	Scope of Explanation	Mechanisms	Concepts of vulnerability	Theoretical Position
Conjunctural (sporadic, contingent)	Food exchange crisis	Declining command over food	Proximate causes (triggers, external to the food system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange relations &amp; market vulnerability</li> <li>• War, geopolitics</li> <li>• Natural hazards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endowments</li> <li>• Capability</li> <li>• Legal rights</li> </ul>	ENTITLEMENT
Structural (processual, necessary)	Food consumption crisis	Powerlessness/poverty	Ultimate causes (structural, internal to the food system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty/lack of social welfare</li> <li>• Demographic growth</li> <li>• Demise of the moral economy</li> <li>• Political rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enfranchisement</li> <li>• Marginalization</li> <li>• Institutions of access and control</li> </ul>	EMPOWERMENT
	Food Production and reproduction crisis	Social relations of production		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surplus appropriation</li> <li>• declining ecological productivity</li> <li>• productivity crises</li> <li>• food insecurity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis Proneness</li> <li>• Class analysis</li> <li>• Political ecology</li> </ul>	POLITICAL ECONOMY

Fig 3 Conceptions of food-hunger crises and theories of vulnerability

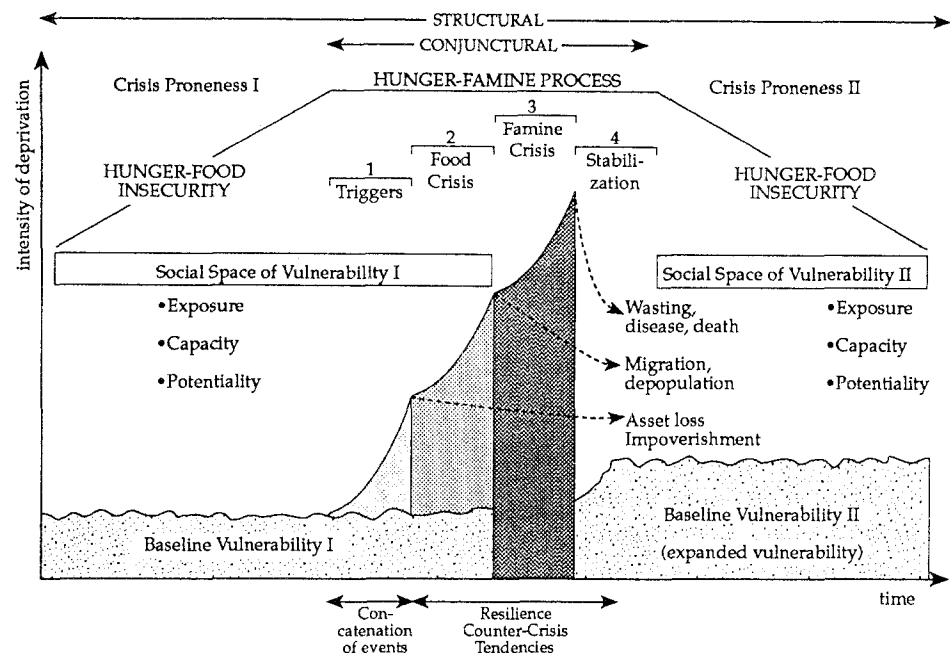
of vulnerability is given by its social relations (Fig 2). If hunger and famine are derived as food entitlement problems, vulnerability is located in the realm of economic and especially market relations. If, conversely, hunger and deprivation reside in the powerlessness of individuals, classes and groups to claim – and enforce – food entitlements, then vulnerability is determined by the power and institutional relations within civil society (for a discussion of related approaches by institutional economists see Bardhan 1990). And finally, if famine and hunger is driven by processes of exploitation and surplus appropriation, it accordingly occupies a location within the space of vulnerability that lies in the realm of class relations.

From this vantage point, it is also possible to represent graphically *both vulnerable groups* (social) and *vulnerable regions* (spatial) within the space of vulnerability. In the former (Fig 2 b), vulnerable individuals, groups and classes can be located according to the causal processes which present possibilities and constraints in the sphere of subsistence. Individuals and groups vulnerable to market perturbations (“people at risk”) and unable to cope with food entitlement decline because they are resource and/or asset-poor, may be located in the economic space of vulnerability which is a function of economic/market relations. Conversely, if the likelihood of deprivation is rooted in politics – which are inscribed in gender (patriarchal politics), work (production politics) and the public sphere (state politics) – because individuals and

groups are powerless, then to the same extent their location in the “political space” of vulnerability is determined by power and institutional relations. And finally, if deprivation arises from processes of surplus extraction and appropriation (that is to say exploitation, or what Wolff and Resnick (1987) call “fundamental class processes”), individuals and groups are located in what we call the structural-historical space of vulnerability given by specific configurations of class relations. In sketching these basic elements of the space of vulnerability, there are two obvious caveats. First, all three spaces of vulnerability exist simultaneously, although their respective weight, or analytical significance is an empirical question. Determining the specific weighting accordingly becomes an important device in assessing the precise way in which food security or insecurity differs between, say Mali and Niger or Kerala and China.

And second, it is important to emphasize that those forces which produce a specific space of vulnerability – and hence potentially a particular pattern of hunger and famine – may also have the capability to provide food security (Shipton 1990, p. 380). Power relations rooted in inequality (patron-client systems for example) may be functionally adequate for the provision of certain subsistence minima through the operation of a moral economy; in the same way, market forces which undermine self-sufficiency and self-provisioning may, through market integration, assist the delivery and movement of basic foodstuffs (Ravallion 1987; McAlpin 1983).

Fig 4  
A realist framework for hunger-famine-vulnerability



The social map of vulnerability has its geographic or spatial counterpart; in other words, vulnerable regions can be located with respect to the tripartite structure of causal processes (Fig 2 c). Those economically marginal regions which regularly or sporadically experience fluctuations in productivity and prices are most liable to food entitlement crises (ie they occupy the economic space of vulnerability). Peripheral regions experience vulnerability expressed through relations of dependency to a regional core which drains surpluses and resources away from the periphery (ie regions within the political space of vulnerability). And finally, those regions shaped by endemic crises and conflicts (both economic and ecological) due to entrenched processes of commercialization, proletarianization and marginalization, are logically situated in the “structural-historical” space produced by class relations.

Fig 2 a–c depict, in a stylised form, the internal architecture of the space of vulnerability in analytical, social and spatial terms. The exact shape and form of the space will be determined by the locally (geographically) and historically specific configurations of class, entitlement and political processes as they are constituted in patterns of exposure, capacity and potentiality in actually existing national capitalisms and socialisms.

### Conclusion: A Realist Theory of Vulnerability and Famine

Fig 3 reveals how the causal structure of vulnerability outlined here provides a framework to integrate the “factors” identified by Kates and Millman, von Braun and

others, into a more logical, and integrated causal structure. To understand the means by which factors become causes lies at the heart of a realist approach to social science (Sayer 1984), and our analysis of famine and hunger can be understood as a preliminary effort at a realist explanation of hunger and deprivation. As Sayer (1984, p. 131) points out, theories make their strongest claims at the abstract level about necessary or internal relations and about causal powers, that is about necessity in the world. Structures are, in this sense, sets of internally (necessary) related practices which carry causal powers (Sayer 1984, pp. 96–97). However, the relationship between causal powers and their effects is not fixed but rather is contingent and open. In other words, while structures tend to produce certain tendencies (“mechanisms”), their effects can be mediated by other mechanisms and by empirical variations in local (“conjunctural”) conditions.

As a realist project, we explore the famine-hunger vulnerability nexus in terms of structures, mechanisms and events (Fig 3). We identify three sets of causal powers which emanate from the three complementary theoretical positions we identified (entitlement, empowerment and political economy). Each operates through differing sorts of mechanisms which typically (ie in “real” circumstances) interact with one another. Each theoretical position (that is, each realm of necessity) is typically associated with specific sorts of causality, specific sorts of mechanisms and tendencies, and as our chart suggests, specific concepts of vulnerability and crisis. As Sayer makes clear, none of this should be seen as a sort of disguised determinism – “according to conditions, the same mechanism may sometimes produce different events and conversely the

same type of event may have different causes (Sayer 1984, p. 106) – but requires intensive research of actual cases (“conjunctures”) which can link structures, events and specific outcomes.

In Fig 4, we draw together, in a highly schematic fashion, this realist approach to famine, hunger and vulnerability. Our intention is simply to emphasize the intersection of structures, tendencies and conjunctures as they impinge upon the famine process. The specific content of the social space of vulnerability, the actual

concatenation of events (Currey 1984) which might trigger a famine, and the specific structural forces at work, while derived from our abstract causal structure of hunger, will naturally be time and place specific. It is the aim of what Sayer calls “intensive research,” – and what we would call the ethnography and phenomenology of famine – to carefully trace the connections between abstract processes (structures), spaces of vulnerability (mechanisms) and actual conditions of famine, hunger and deprivation (events).

### Footnotes

- 1) Some of the ideas in this paper are elaborated in much more detail, including case studies, in a paper by the authors entitled “The Space of Vulnerability: The Causal Structure of Hunger and Famine”, published in *Progress in Human Geography*, 13, 1, 43–67 (1993).
- 2) In the most recent elaborations of entitlement theory, Drèze and Sen (1989) move beyond narrow legal and economic definitions and attempt to circumscribe the freedom people have to avoid hunger and lead a healthy active life. In their concern with what they call capability and the totality of rights, entitlement theory can provide an important bridge with our second perspective on vulnerability and hunger, namely empowerment. In the same way, social security theory, insofar as it addresses the political processes by which states provide welfare and the legitimacy of claims made by groups and classes over public resources, also

raises the question of rights over food, and hence links entitlement with enfranchisement.

- 3) All of these literatures obviously overlap and are intertwined in complex ways. For our purposes, however, we simply wish to establish the obvious interconnections between our three broad approaches to hunger and vulnerability. Economic and legal entitlements at some point become matters of rights and politics; empowerment is invariably grounded in specific property rights or specific bundles of entitlements. Like enfranchisement and Basic Needs approaches, the new agrarian studies, which speak to production under conditions of imperfect markets and extreme uncertainty, all meet on a larger common ground, and this is especially clear in light of our previous remarks on informal social security and social welfare.
- 4) Class analyses of hunger and famine are similar, in many respects, to marginalization theories and to “political ecology” (Blaikie 1985; Blaikie and Brookfield 1987).

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