

Collectivization of Soviet agriculture and the 1932-1933 famine

Natalia Naumenko

Discussion by Victor Arshavskiy

Collectivization

Collectivization was a policy of forced consolidation of individual peasant households into collective farms called “kolkhozes” as carried out by the Soviet government in the late 1920's - early 1930's.

Collective farming was a Communist ideal and ultimate goal. In a collective farm peasants would work together freely and happily without labor exploitation (i.e., hired labor). The question was when the farmers are ready for that and whether they should be forced into it

Dekulakization

Dekulakization was the Soviet campaign of political repressions, including arrests, deportations, and executions of millions of the better-off peasants and their families in 1929–1932.

Kulaks were peasants who worked harder than others, and, therefore, were relatively richer

Famine 1932 – 1933

Disastrous famine hit Soviet Union a few years after massive *collectivization* and *dekulakization*. The famine started in winter 1931-1932 and continued until harvest time of 1933 (about 1.5 years).

The famine severely hit Ukraine and many other regions (among others: Volga River region, Northern Caucasus, Kazakhstan)

Holodomor, Genocide

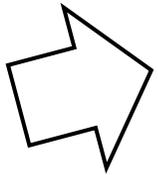
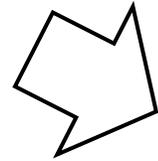
The word “Holodomor” often used to interpret the famine as a genocide against Ukrainians. Presumably, Stalin saw a threat in uprising, especially from Ukrainian peasants, and used the famine as a cheap substitute for mass-killing.

There are no documents to support it, and there is a heated debate among politicians and historians whether it was the case.

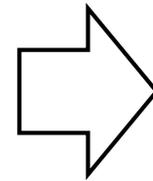
Results in this paper are likely to support the alternative

Collectivization

Extreme weather
shocks



BLACK
BOX

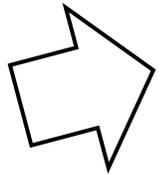
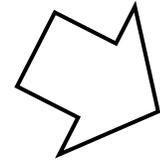


Famine,
mortality

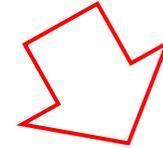
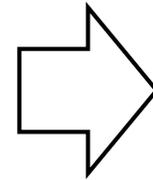
Procurement

Collectivization

Extreme weather
shocks



BLACK
BOX



Famine,
mortality

Procurement

- The government needed money to make tanks
- The only way to get that much money was to sell grain
- Grain was bought from peasants (by mostly private organizations)
- Government gradually reduced prices, which resulted in less procurement
- Starting 1927-1928 there was forced procurement, no “free market” anymore

Effects of collectivization and procurement on mortality

$$Mortality_{1933} = C + \underset{(.009)}{.038^{***}} Collectivization_{1930} + \underset{(.002)}{.006^{***}} WheatRye_{1925}$$

Financial Times, April 13, 1933 (by Gareth Jones)

- The main result of the Five-Year Plan has been ruin of Russian agriculture. The main reason for the catastrophe in Russian agriculture is the Soviet policy of collectivization
- The policy of creating large collective farms, where the land was to be owned and cultivated in common, led to the land being taken away from more than two-thirds of the peasantry, and incentive to work disappeared
- The massacre of cattle by peasants not wishing to sacrifice their property for nothing to the collective farm
- Six or seven millions of the best workers (the Kulaks) have been uprooted and deprived of their land. Apart from all consideration of human feelings, the existence of many millions of good producers is an immense capital value to any country, and to have destroyed such capital value means an inestimable loss to the national wealth of Russia

Direct effects of collectivization

- Low work incentives
- Animal slaughtering
- *Dekulakization*

Direct effects of collectivization

- Low work incentives
- Animal slaughtering
- *Dekulakization*
- Easy procurement

Direct effects of collectivization

- Low work incentives
- Animal slaughtering
- *Dekulakization*

- Easy procurement
- **More observability**

Direct effects of collectivization

- Low work incentives
- Animal slaughtering
- *Dekulakization*

- Easy procurement
- More observability

The “*diamond*” of the paper is that it distinguishes between the first three effects and the last two

Effects of collectivization and procurement on mortality

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mortality}_{1933} = C &+ \underset{(.020)}{.088^{***}} \text{Collectivization}_{1930} \\ &+ \underset{(.003)}{.011^{***}} \text{WheatRye}_{1925} - \underset{(.005)}{.014^{***}} \text{WheatRye}_{1925} \times \text{Coll}_{1930} \end{aligned}$$

Financial Times, April 13, 1933 (by Gareth Jones)

- The main result of the Five-Year Plan has been ruin of Russian agriculture. The main reason for the catastrophe in Russian agriculture is the Soviet policy of collectivization
- The policy of creating large collective farms, where the land was to be owned and cultivated in common, led to the land being taken away from more than two-thirds of the peasantry, and incentive to work disappeared
- The massacre of cattle by peasants not wishing to sacrifice their property for nothing to the collective farm
- Six or seven millions of the best workers (the Kulaks) have been uprooted and deprived of their land. Apart from all consideration of human feelings, the existence of many millions of good producers is an immense capital value to any country, and to have destroyed such capital value means an inestimable loss to the national wealth of Russia

Effects of dekulakization and procurement proxy

- Wheat and Rye per capita of 1925 is used as a proxy for the effect of procurement. The logic is that the more they produced before, the more should be produced now, and the more we should take from them
- When *best producers* are deprived of their lands and forced to go to Siberia, this may significantly change the district composition. I.e., quite possible that rich become poor
- The effect that is caught by the proxy WheatRye1925, may be picking the dekulakization effect, and has negative impact of mortality for precisely this reason

Effects of dekulakization and procurement proxy

- Wheat and Rye per capita of 1925 is used as a proxy for the effect of procurement. The logic is that the more they produced before, the more should be produced now, and the more we should take from them
- When *best producers* are deprived of their lands and forced to go to Siberia, this may significantly change the district composition. I.e., quite possible that rich become poor
- The effect that is caught by the proxy WheatRye1925, may be picking the dekulakization effect, and has negative impact of mortality for precisely this reason
- It does NOT explain negative coefficient of interaction, however, I still believe, that more evidence to support WheatRye1925 as a proxy for procurement are needed