

NORM DIFFUSION IN INTERNATIONAL FOOD AID POLICY:  
ARE THE EUROPEAN UNION AND OTHER RISING GLOBAL ACTORS  
REPLACING US DOMINANCE?

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## ABSTRACT

Rachel Cylus: Norm Diffusion in International Food Aid Policy: Are the European Union and other Rising Global Actors Replacing US Dominance?  
(Under the Direction of Holger Moroff)

Since 1954 the United States has administered an international food aid program dependent on domestically grown agriculture shipped aboard US-flagged merchant marine vessels. As such, US food aid has been closely tied to the interests of the US government, rather than the needs of developing or crisis-ridden countries. As a norm entrepreneur, the US actively advocated for the creation of similar in-kind aid program in other countries throughout the 1960s and 70s. However, as the Cold War came to an end, newly empowered actors, such as the European Union, International Organizations, NGOs and Multinational Corporations began to question in-kind aid and propose new methods for dealing with global hunger and food crises. This paper will consider whether new food aid policies point to the rise of the EU as a new potential norm entrepreneur and why the US is rejecting or resisting these new norms.

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## INTRODUCTION

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, in their article *International Norm Dynamics and Political Change* state that, “Norms do not appear out of thin air, they are actively built by agents with strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior” (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998, p. 896). This paper will evaluate food aid policy shifts through the process of norm diffusion. It looks at the relationship between global food aid norms and the national food aid policies, posing the question: How do changes in food aid policies act as a lens through which to evaluate broader changes in global governance patterns?

I will begin by illustrating how the United States married its 1950s food aid program to emerging shared identities of industrialized countries and International Organizations (IOs). In this way, what began as a realist US Cold War policy must be reread through constructivist and liberal perspectives to understand why the US interest in international food aid changed and how it pressured other actors to change their policies as well. After the Cold War, shifting global governance models led to the growing influence of other actors, such as IOs, NGOs, MNCs and supranational bodies. These new actors, especially the European Union, are pursuing their own interests, which are transforming food aid norms away from the US model. As a result, American food aid actors today are often at odds with one another. Lobbies such as Shipping Unions and domestic food producers, strive to maintain the Cold War order from which they directly benefit, while the political elite, feel pressure to conform to newly arising global norms, leaving US legislators at an impasse. This conflict between how domestic versus international interests shape policy can be understood by analyzing previous examples of food aid policy transformation in the United States as well as the European Union.

Motivated by Cold War era interests of economic self-preservation and security from Soviet expansion, the US acted as a norm entrepreneur to spread its own policy of in-kind food aid to other industrialized countries. This norm was able to gain traction through IOs, because these institutions had been created in large part by the United States in what John Ikenberry refers to as, “the building of American postwar order” (Ikenberry 2011, p. 165). The United States restrained itself through international institutions in an effort to, “[manage] international relations in what officials saw as an emerging era when national solutions to economic stability and national security would not suffice” (Ibid, p. 179). Ikenberry adds that:

The fact that the United States was so powerful meant that it could dominate these institutions. It could set the terms for cooperation, and the IOs would for the most part operate in ways that would be congenial to American interests (Ibid, p. 180).

This American dominance of and influence over IOs was unquestioned until the end of the Cold War, when actors such as the EU, the BRICS, NGOs, MNCs and IOs began to take on larger roles in global governance. This governance shift imposes new pressures and pushes new potential norms, which can be observed through recent food aid policies.

The first part of this paper establishes the realist interests that shaped US food aid in the immediate post World War II era. It explores the history of instrumentalizing food as a tool of material power, first through the Marshall Plan and then through Public Law 480. Part two uses liberal and constructivist lenses to explain how food aid was reframed in the 1960s and 1970s in order to become a norm. According to a liberal perspective, the US attempted to use multilateralism and burden sharing to expand its food aid efforts. The constructivist perspective illustrates how the US tied its vision of food aid to concepts of shared ideas, values and identities in order to appeal to international and domestic audiences. Part three looks at how food aid has changed since the end of the Cold War by considering the roles rising actors such as IOs, NGOs and MNCs as well as the EU, and how they are impacting current discourses on food aid. Part four looks at the EU as a case study of a polity whose member-states initially rejected normative food aid, because it did not match their individual interests. The EU was then able to conform to

normative food aid in the 70s and 80s through the creation of a new supranational policy. I argue that as the EU continued to find its voice as a leader in global development policy with distinctive ideas about morality, human rights and shared identity, it has been able to take a stronger role in reshaping new food aid norms. And finally, part five considers whether or not food aid norms are currently changing in the US to conform to the new model. I will confront the question of whether the US, through its continued use of in-kind food aid represents a case of norm rejection or whether conformity to new so-called food assistance norms are being pushed by American political elite.

## PART ONE: Food as an Instrument of US Interests

The modern idea of redistributing food as a tool for domestic and foreign policy took shape through the Post World War II era recovery policies of the United States. These programs differed from previous aid after World War I, aimed at preventing widespread starvation, in their clear focus on infrastructure and development (Lancaster 2006, p. 26). The Marshall Plan provided European countries, which had almost entirely exhausted their foreign exchange reserves, with a means to import goods. While food was not the only element of the Marshall Plan, it was a primary motivator behind the program. Secretary of State George C. Marshall stated just a few months after the plan's proposal that, "Food is the very basis of all reconstruction. Hunger and insecurity are the worst enemies of peace" (Lambers 2008, p. 1).

The implicit economic and political goals of the Marshall Plan served as guidance for future, more expansive developmental food aid programs (Cathie 1990, p. 458). The US had an economic incentive to rebuild the European and Japanese economies so they could develop into stable export markets to sustain the post-war American economic boom. Development programs like the Marshall Plan aimed to strengthen potential allies against the encroaching Soviet Bloc (Stern 2006). Hardships suffered during the post-war recovery, when Germany in particular experienced extreme hunger and food shortages, would be eased by the provision of the basic necessity of food and the resources to become agriculturally productive and stable again. By offering its own commodities for discount purchase (Ibid, p. 3), the US ensured a reputation as the generous and humane superpower, in sharp contrast to the brutish post-war impression left by the Soviet army in Europe. Recovery programs were intended to help weakened European countries prevent Communist takeovers by either the Soviets or hungry, disgruntled constituents within their own societies (Essex 2014, p. 267). The post World War II



aid narrative illustrates that by the 1940s the US was motivated primarily by its own interests: trade expansion and Soviet containment. These twin interests, tied to the neorealist concept of states seeking self-preservation (Telbami 2002) continued to drive US foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

The passage of Public Law 480, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, on July 10, 1954 (US Food Aid and Security), represented several shifts in US priorities. One shift was the need to regulate domestic grain prices. At the end of the Korean War, agricultural commodity prices collapsed (Diven 2001). In addition, due to industrialized agricultural practices and a policy of farm subsidies initiated after World War II, US farmers were producing grain, especially wheat, surpluses. The government, concerned about price deflation, became the “buyer of last resort,” (Clapp & Fuchs 2009) amassing surplus stocks.

In the 1950s, the US also became more aware of the developing world. Amid the process of decolonization, new countries were born out of former European Empires, forming what would be coined in 1952 by French demographer Alfred Sauvy, the “Third World.” (Rethinking The “Third World” 2010) Efforts to contain Communism in the 1950s and 60s shifted American international focus from Europe and Japan to the Global South (Cathie 1990, p. 458), where emerging post-colonial, economically and politically weak countries were seen as Cold War battlegrounds.

Like after World War II, there were concerns that hunger and competition for land among the poor would leave these countries vulnerable to, “communist political persuasion and machination” (Essex 2010, p. 266, 267). As such, one of the claims made by advocates for PL 480, was that food aid could be used to “reward loyal allies.” (Diven 2001) Food might play a valuable role in security and diplomatic endeavors (Essex 2010, p. 272), and as such, food as foreign aid should not necessarily be reserved for crises. This idea reinforced neorealist ideas, which categorize food as a material resource and therefore a symbol and tool of national power. Neorealism sees material resources, like food, as instruments for achieving influence (Telbami

2002, p. 160). As a result the new food aid policy focused on developing long-term bilateral relationships, “among the United states and friendly nations” (Public Law 480-83 Congress 1954, p. 2) that might benefit from a stable food supply and with which the US had a foreign policy interest. PL 480 clarified that these “friendly nations”, were “any country other than the USSR or any nation or area dominated or controlled by the foreign government or foreign organization controlling the world Communist movement” (Public Law 480 – 83 Congress 1954, p. 4).

In addition to serving as a tool of influence, the mechanisms of food aid were designed to build military power by strengthening American control and access to international waters. The Cargo Preference Act, also signed in 1954, insured that at least 50% of government purchased commodities, which included food aid, would be transported aboard U.S. flagged-ships. The ships and their crews would be required to maintain military readiness and preparedness with the idea that if necessary, this merchant marine fleet could transform from cargo carriers to warships (House of Representatives 2013, p. 7).

PL 480 made no secret of its interest-based motives in which the US was the primary benefactor. When Eisenhower passed Public Law 480, he stated that the dominant motivation was, “[to] lay the basis for a permanent expansion of our exports of agricultural products with lasting benefits to ourselves and peoples of other lands” (US Food Aid and Security). This underscores the realist notion to serve first and foremost the interests of one’s own country (Morgenthau 1978). The legislation worded its objectives as:

To facilitate the convertibility of currency, to promote the economic stability of American agriculture and the national welfare, to make maximum efficient use of surplus agricultural commodities in furtherance of the foreign policy of the United States, and to stimulate and facilitate the expansion of foreign trade in agricultural commodities produced in the United States... (Public Law 480 – 83 Congress 1954, p. 2).

But PL 480 alone does not demonstrate the foundation for a food aid norm, as it was solely a bilateral project between the US and hand-selected “friendly” countries. The US maintained ultimate authority in determining recipient countries and the conditions of

donations. However the US was not the only country developing surplus-based food aid programs. On a smaller scale, Australia and Canada, as fellow agricultural surplus countries, began similar processes of off-loading agricultural surpluses through international food assistance programs. Canada's program, which also began in the early 1950s, was fairly restrictive, requiring that 90% of the country's food aid budget be spent buying and shipping Canadian-sourced agricultural commodities (Smillie 2009, p. 193).<sup>1</sup> The existence of similar types of food policies in other wheat exporting countries provided a network of likeminded actors who would support the US when it later sought to spread food aid as a global norm.

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<sup>1</sup> While it began as a small endeavor, shipping \$645,000 of flour to Ceylon in 1957 (US food aid by comparison amounted to \$1.5 billion in foodstuffs the same year), by 1958/59 the Canadian program expanded to \$26 million in food shipments, an increase from 1.9% - 46.6% of total aid expenditures (Charlton 2002, p. 20).

## PART TWO: Reshaping In-Kind Food Aid as a Global Norm

Modernization theory created a reason why effective food aid policy had to be broader, extending from a US policy to a global norm. Popularized in the late 1950s and into the 60s, modernization theory posited that western countries could and should play a role in helping less developed countries to achieve liberal capitalism and democracy (Essex 2014, p. 272).

Modernizing would take place when developing countries were wealthier and more industrialized, and one of the barriers to higher incomes in the developing world was dependence on subsistence farming techniques. Providing traditionally agricultural countries with a stable food source would allow rural populations to urbanize and industrialize quicker.

Seymour Lipset, for example, linked capitalism and the associated accumulation of wealth with democratization (Krastev 2011, p. 10). It could therefore be concluded that food aid was a tool that would promote not only capitalism, but also democratization. This meant that conversely, underdevelopment must be a primary characteristic that put a country at risk of turning to Communism. In addition, liberalists, dating back to de Tocqueville in his chapter of *Democracy in America* entitled, “Why Revolutions Will Become Rare,” discussed that democratization fosters uniform beliefs and discourages conflict and revolution (Kaledin 2011, p. 120). Thus, food aid could be interpreted a tool to ensure global peace and prosperity.

The US was also interested in “burden sharing.” It was an enormous project to provide food for all of the underdeveloped countries. The government-held surpluses of the early 50s had already been drastically reduced by the end of the decade (Food Aid and Food Security 1985, p. 6), and subsequent American farming legislation was discouraging excess production. With the reduction of government-held wheat stocks, maintaining food aid programs into the 60s would require the government to purchase food for PL 480 from American farmers (Mettrick, 1969, p. 98). Coordinating with other surplus-producing countries and even food

importing countries would potentially create new markets for American farmers as sellers of food to global food aid programs.

But, in order to persuade the rest of the world, especially food importing countries, that food aid had a global purpose, it had to be reframed for both the American and international audiences. This could be accomplished by connecting food aid to other emerging norms, such as the promotion of peace and the furthering of human rights. IOs, which were already actively promoting these norms, provided the appropriate forum for the US to expand food aid. The use of existing norms to promote food aid, demonstrates constructivist ideas about creating shared identities.

Eisenhower, followed by Kennedy, set out to reframe food aid, first for a domestic audience. Eisenhower redefined both the purpose of food aid and its potential actors in a speech to Congress in 1959 saying, “Food can be a powerful instrument for all the free world in building a durable peace. We and other surplus-producing nations must do our very best to make the fullest constructive use of our abundance of agricultural products to this end” (Lambers 2011). Compared to his discussion of PL 480 in 1954, the shift is clear. No longer was the primary focus of surplus agriculture the creation of new export markets, nor was food aid a project for the US to pursue alone.

Using the discourses of peace and humanitarianism, Kennedy declared the 1960s the “Decade of Development” for the United States and used these themes to inform the initiatives of his first year in office (The 1960s Decade of Development 1995). They included the launch of the Alliance for Progress, the Peace Corps, the Agency for International Development (USAID) and Food for Peace (Development Doctrine and Modernization Theory). Food for Peace gave a values-based facelift to PL 480. Kennedy discussed the program saying, “Food is strength, and food is peace, and food is freedom, and food is helping the people around the world whose good will and friendship we want” (US Food Aid and Security). Whereas earlier references to “friendship,” in connection to food aid were used to differentiate between the Soviet bloc and the

west, Kennedy's pairing of friendship with "good will," implies a broader interests in moving food aid from a purely security-driven and diplomatic effort – which he had criticized during his campaign - to one of long-term developmental relationships with countries of interest (Development Doctrine and Modernization Theory). Therefore "Food for Peace" was to be partly administered by the newly created USAID (Milestones: 1961 – 1968 2013). Under Kennedy, food aid grew dramatically. By the mid 1960s Food for Peace accounted for half of US food exports and a majority of its development aid (Barrett and Maxwell (a) 2005, p. 11).<sup>2</sup>

In a speech by Kennedy on September 25, 1961, at the United Nations General Assembly, the "Decade of Development" was extended from an American project to a global one (The 1960s Decade of Development). To the UN Kennedy said, "my Nation, which has freely shared its capital and its technology to help others help themselves, now proposes officially designating this decade of the 1960's as the United Nations Decade of Development" (Kennedy (a) 1961). The link to modernization theory here is clear in his wording that aid allows countries to "help themselves." It reinforces notions of sovereignty and self-determination in the developing world, while supporting the liberal idea of international cooperation through IOs. The use of the word, "freely," contradicts the actual character of Food for Peace, a three-part program, two of which, Titles I and III, relied on the sale of heavily subsidized commodities to developing countries (Public Law 480 – 83 Congress 1954). However, use of the word "freely" constructs a moral undertone to development and establishes the idea that food aid and other forms of development aid show generosity, reflect selflessness, and focus on the needs of the recipient countries at the potential expense of the donors.

The expansion of the role of IOs in the post-war order made them ideal for American norm diffusion. The US and its political elite played active roles in the UN and the formation of its agencies, as well as in the determination of international agreements and treaties. According

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<sup>2</sup> Among the top recipients of US food aid policy in 1960 were India, Poland, Egypt, Pakistan, Israel and Brazil, countries where the US maintained long-term development programs (Fox 2007).

to Robert Gilpin, the involvement of the US in IOs underscores a general US post-war interest in embedding itself and its power within international organizations in order to assert a hegemonic order without the use of expensive and potentially alienating methods of coercion. He proposes that America fostered the creation of IOs as neutral vessels for channeling its own authority (Gilpin 2002). The United States' power leverage within the UN matches ideas set forth by Robert Keohane, who argues that in the 1950s and 60s, international organizations were, "mere instruments of governments, and therefore unimportant in their own right" (Ozgercin and Weiss 2009, p. 2).

The early days of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), demonstrate the initial feebleness of IOs. Created at the behest of President Roosevelt at the Hot Springs Conference in 1943 (Orr 1966, p. 160), the FAO, an agency of the UN, was intended to gather data on global food issues. It was not an agency for providing aid (Ibid). The first General Director, Sir John Boyd Orr, hoped the FAO would play an active role in food policy and he proposed the creation of a global food plan.<sup>3</sup> In 1948, Orr resigned in frustration. His vision of an active and collaborative agency had failed to gain momentum, because it did not fit the interests of the bipolar Cold War world order (Ibid). Participating in a system of global food reserves and price controls would have challenged the material power advantages that both the US and the USSR sought to exploit. Orr's failure demonstrates that for a norm to gain traction during the Cold War, it needed to share the interests of one of the super powers.

A decade later, the FAO was able to transform, because President Kennedy supported the vision of Director General of the FAO, B.R. Sen.<sup>4</sup> Sen proposed the Freedom From Hunger

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<sup>3</sup> Orr's world food plan was to include a world food board that would control the market, regulate food prices, buy surpluses, establish international food reserves to sell to those in need, and invest in technological and agricultural development programs to help countries meet their own food supply needs (Orr 1966).

<sup>4</sup> The US was also among the first countries to establish its own FFHC national committee (Kennedy (b) 1961), and in 1963 the United States hosted and in large part funded the first

Campaign (FFHC), a five-year program to raise awareness of hunger around the world through national Committees, NGOs and grassroots involvement (Lancaster 2006, p. 37).<sup>5</sup> US support of FFHC not only helped the FAO legitimize its shifting focus, it also helped domestically and internationally raise awareness of US food aid efforts and ground them in global efforts related to universal human rights. The idea that the US would support this type of multilateral action demonstrates a liberal vision that national interests could be achieved with and through cooperative alliances between state and non-state actors, not merely through anarchic material advantage.

At first glance the FFHC seems contradictory to US food aid. It emphasized teaching developing countries agricultural techniques and sharing technology to secure domestic food supplies. It opposed the idea that the developing world should depend on other countries for food. Kennedy used a constructivist argument to address this disconnect in a speech to the World Food Congress in 1963 saying:

The United States pledges its full support for this campaign ... Through our Food for Peace program, the people of the United States have contributed more than \$12 billion worth of food and fiber to less fortunate peoples during the past decade. These donations now bring food to 100 million people in 100 countries of the world including 40 million school children. We are grateful for the opportunity our agricultural abundance offers us to share our food resources with the hungry of the world.... But it is NOT a permanent solution...All of our stored abundance, even if it could be distributed evenly to all the undernourished of the world, would provide a balanced diet for less than one month (Kennedy 1963).

Kennedy presented food aid as both an honor for individual donor countries, such as the US, and as a responsibility of the developed world. He establishes in-kind aid as morally driven. But he also highlighted the liberal idea that developmental aid requires burden sharing by explaining that the US alone would fail in its efforts to feed the world (Cathie 1990, p. 459). Kennedy's speech suggests that food aid and the FFHC are pieces of an interconnected puzzle.

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World Food Congress, which brought together UN agencies, national governments, NGOs and individuals to discuss issues concerning world hunger (Kennedy 1963).

<sup>5</sup> Sen also pioneered the idea of mobilizing Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as potential partners of IOs (Bunch 2007).



Eventually all countries should become self-sufficient, but, in the meantime, in-kind food aid, such as that provided by the US, is not only helpful, it is necessary. Furthermore it is not sufficient for the US to act alone, just as it is not sufficient for food aid to act as the only source of developmental aid (Kennedy 1963).

In parallel to the launch of FFHC, which created global awareness of hunger, the founding of the World Food Program (WFP), also at the initiative of the US, played a decisive role in diffusing and defining normative food aid. The approval in 1961 of the UN General Assembly resolution on “Provision of Food Surpluses to Food Deficient People Through the UN System” was intended to establish WFP in 1963.<sup>6</sup> A joint program of the UN and FAO, the WFP was an instrument to encourage burden sharing between industrialized countries by creating a multilateral food aid mechanism. Like PL 480, WFP focused on social and infrastructure projects in addition to crisis management (Food Aid and Food Security 1985, p. 5).

However, the mere creation of WFP did not provide the push to normalize food aid. Contributions to WFP were voluntary, and while many European countries had their own aid programs, and most by that time had FFHC committees, European aid was as self-interested as American aid. Former colonial powers focused on maintaining relationships with former colonies. France, for example, spent nearly 97% of its bilateral aid on former colonies and other French-speaking countries in 1966 (Lancaster 2006, p. 147). Food importing countries, such as the UK, had no interest in taking up policies seen as advantageous to surplus-producing countries. Some countries resented in-kind food aid policies, because they artificially increased import prices by decreasing the amount of grain available on the global market (Mettrick 1969). Constructivist arguments tying food aid to norms such as humanitarianism and peace promotion would not be sufficient to convince countries to participate in normative in-kind aid programs.

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<sup>6</sup> Famine in Iran in 1962 led to an early start of WFP.

Food aid was taken up as a global cause when it appeared to impact the economic stability and food supplies of the developed world. This happened through two events: the signing of the Food Aid Convention in 1967 and the World Food Crisis of 1972-3. Troubling demographic projections in the mid 1960s acted as the catalyst for both events. Developing countries showed signs of rapidly increasing populations, which raised questions about how to feed a growing world, especially when so much of that growth was concentrated in unstable, poor, countries (Alexandratos 1995, ch. 7). By the end of the 60s and early 70s, modernization theory had fallen out of popularity. However, global fears of the impact of population growth and resource shortages on the western world persisted (Essex 2014, p. 272). The Wheat Trade Convention, signed in 1967, took notice of these concerns, especially as they related to global food supply. It asserted as its third objective, “to further international cooperation in connection with world wheat problems, recognizing the relationship of the trade in wheat to the economic stability of markets for other agricultural products” (International Grains Arrangement 1967).

The US pushed to have food aid included as an element of the Kennedy Round of the GATT trade negotiations in 1967 by including a new Food Aid Convention (FAC), in the International Grains Agreement (IGA) (Cathie 1990, p. 459), which maintains international trade regulations for cereals (Barrett and Maxwell (b) 2005, p. 108). Unlike previous attempts to rally support for food aid by tying it to shared values, the unification of the FAC and the IGA made food aid a negotiating point for international grain trade agreements. The IGA was negotiated mostly between industrialized countries (Food Aid and Food Security 1985, p. 6).<sup>7</sup> This meant that both the IGA and the FAC excluded any potential food aid recipient countries from negotiations (Barrett and Maxwell (b) 2005, p. 108).

The FAC was the first international agreement to commit countries to minimum annual food aid commitments. At this time the commitments only referred to aid in the form of, “wheat, coarse grains, or the cash equivalent thereof” (International Grains Arrangement 1967). It

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<sup>7</sup> There were initially 19 signatories to the IGA including the EEC member-states.

specified that, “Grain purchases shall be made from participating countries,” (Ibid) meaning that food importing countries would have to buy grain from surplus countries, like the US, to fulfill their food donation commitments.<sup>8</sup> The FAC was seen by many countries as an agreement designed to favor the US. The Kennedy Round came to be known in Britain as the Kennedy Round Food Aid Agreement (Mettrick 1969, p. 97). However, from the US perspective, it was intended to counterbalance the accumulation of grain surpluses and heavy use of subsidies in the EEC through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Hoddinott and Cohen 2007, p. 2).

The World Food Crisis of 1972-73 further tipped developed countries to conform to the norm of redistributing food to less developed countries. The traditional surplus producing countries – the United States, Canada and Australia – began reducing their wheat production by about one third starting in 1970 (Headey & Fan 2010, p. 82). This reduction meant that any change in demand could cause global price shocks. In August 1971, the US left the Bretton Woods Accord, allowing the dollar to become a floating, and temporarily devalued currency. The devalued dollar and decreasing wheat supply resulted in inflated global grain prices (Ibid, p. 85). In addition, détente during the Nixon administration relaxed economic and political relations and opened trade between the US and the Soviet Union. After poor global grain harvests in 1972 which resulted in a 3% decline in world grain production, the USSR unexpectedly purchased 30 million metric tons of grain, three quarters of the world’s commercially traded grain, from the US. The result was a global food crisis (Ibid, p. 85).

Initially the food crisis of the 1970s seemed to decrease the interest in in-kind food aid – even in the US. In 1973-1974 US bilateral food aid dropped to an all time low (Headey & Fan 2010, p. 83). In fact food aid programs of individual countries decreased across the developed world during the crisis years. The FAC was the primary institution that kept food aid alive (Clay,

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<sup>8</sup> While the agreement also said that, “not less than 25 percent of the cash contribution to purchase grain for food aid... shall be used to purchase grains produced in developing countries,” (International Grains Agreement 1967,) Argentina, a surplus-producing country, was the only developing country to sign (Clay, Pillai & Benson 1998, p. 11).

Pillai and Benson 1998, p. 13). Despite criticisms at its signing, countries that otherwise nearly eliminated their bilateral food aid programs during the Food Crisis maintained their minimum contributions to the FAC and eventually increased them (Ibid, p. 13). Other forms of multilateral aid, such as the EEC food aid program, which had been created because of FAC negotiations, grew in importance after the crisis and donations commitments to the FAC increased over the following years.<sup>9</sup>

One can interpret these donation increases as confirmation that countries recognized the importance of food redistribution. One can also interpret that after the crisis, countries reevaluated their agricultural sectors and made plans to increase yields in the future. For example, the US and Canada reevaluated their farming techniques to increase production, although these techniques inevitably led to unnecessary surpluses in need of disposal.<sup>10</sup> The FAC also gradually adjusted the types of donations it accepted during the 1980s to include rice and pulses as acceptable in-kind donations (Food Aid and Food Security 1985, p. 6). This reflected greater consideration for the diets and nutrition of people in recipient countries. But, it was also an attempt to make in-kind food aid donations better fit the interests and abilities of donor countries without large cereals exports. Similarly, more cash donations from import-driven countries were also accepted.

The World Food Conference of 1974 also strengthened normative food aid. At the conference, the new term, “food security,” was defined as the, “availability at all times of adequate world supplies of basic food-stuffs... to sustain steady expansion of food

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<sup>9</sup> Whereas the FAC renegotiation of 1971 had led to a very slight decrease in food aid commitments -from 4.3 million tons of cereal in 1967 to 4.2 – at the World Food Council in 1974, a long-term target for future global food aid commitments was set at 10 million tons of cereals. At the next renegotiation of the FAC, in 1980, commitments were raised to 7.6 million tons, and three more donor countries signed the agreement (Food Aid and Food Security 1985, p. 6).

<sup>10</sup> The US Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz pushed farmers to produce more food through a “fence-row to fence-row” method aimed at increasing foreign sales (Counihan 2002). Butz also indicated in interviews that selling grain to Russia and China was a motivator behind détente policies (‘Butz links grain sales to detente with Reds’1973).

consumption... and to offset fluctuations in production and prices” (Jarosz 2014, p. 170). The conference advocated important changes in how food security should be managed, for example that countries should plan their food aid donations ahead of time to make donations less market-dependent, and that more aid should be channeled through multilateral organizations like WFP (Food Aid and Food Security 1985, p.7). The conference supported measures to increase WFP’s capacity to meet international food needs in emergencies. For example, as a result of the Conference, the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) was later established to provide 500,000 tons of food in addition to regular pledges made to the WFP, so that regular pledges could continue to serve development purposes (Ibid, p. 6). In other words, food security helped lead to the awareness that there were indeed two types of food aid - aid for crisis and aid for development. Both were necessary, but they required different considerations.

### PART THREE: Shifting Power Structures and New Discourses in Food Aid

Changing global governance models and the rise of new actors led to the unmaking of normative in-kind food aid at the end of the Cold War. These new actors, which included IOs, NGOs, MNCs and supranational governing bodies, filled the void left by the bipolar world order. Partially as a result of the efforts by the US to lead through IOs, these institutions gradually gained legitimate authority in their own right (Marzedda-Mlynarska 2013, p. 41). Similarly, Cold War development policies legitimized the work of NGOs as influential policy actors (Barrett & Maxwell 2005 (b), 107). Liberalization and privatization policies empowered Multinational Corporations (MNCs) as actors dependent on but rarely beholden to nation-states. This era also witnessed the rise of the EU as a growing supranational body, which was becoming more self-aware of its own political prowess.

The conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT in 1994, which created the WTO, put into effect liberal trade policies. For the first time, through the discussion of export subsidies, GATT negotiations dealt directly with agriculture (Garzon 2007). The EU and the US were at odds with one another on export subsidies, and each headed an opposing camp. The US headed the Cairns Group, which included fourteen surplus-producing agriculture export countries, including Australia and Canada, interested in eliminating domestic trade-distorting subsidies so that their products would be more competitive in the international market (Martin and Winters 1995, p. 3). The EU-led camp consisted of countries with limited exports as well as import-dependent countries, including Japan, Korea, and the EFTA countries. These countries preferred limited reform to subsidies, which, in the case of the EU, maintained low domestic prices while still

allowing for expanded foreign trade (Ibid, p. 3). Agricultural trade liberalization policies triumphed in the creation of the 1994 Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) (Ibid, p. 3).<sup>11</sup>

The Uruguay Round indirectly contributed to an overall decline in food aid by eliminating incentives for countries to redistribute food as part of development policy. Non-surplus producing countries no longer stood to gain from linking in-kind food aid to development policy, although they still felt moral obligations to participate in crisis management. While the US and Canada still had interests in offloading surpluses, price increases and the opening of markets meant that some food that had previously been offered at discounted prices as part of aid programs could be sold at higher prices, as it was no longer competing with subsidized exports. As such, the US and Canada each reduced their commitments to FAC by 44% and 33% respectively in 1995 (Clay, Pillai & Benson 1998, p. 11).

The intention of trade liberalization was to stabilize international prices and open markets, which it was believed would help ease future supply shocks (The Impact of the Uruguay Round 1995). However, the FAO recognized even before Uruguay Round policies were implemented, through a study conducted in 1995, that by the year 2000 trade liberalization would likely increase prices of all food commodities. The study explained with regard to developing countries that:

With the reduction of these targeted subsidies these countries will increasingly have to pay world market prices at a time when world food prices are expected to increase. There is also some concern that, although the Uruguay Round agreement poses no limits on legitimate food aid, the volume of food aid, which historically has been linked closely to the level of surplus stocks, could be limited in the future as surplus stocks are run down. Clearly, some countries would be in need of assistance to improve consumption levels and, in particular, to compensate them for any increases in their food bills resulting from

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<sup>11</sup> The AoA was not actually very strict towards food aid control, but it tried to prevent donors from tying bilateral food aid to their own domestic or export-related interests, and it stipulated that food aid should be conducted in accordance with the FAO 'Principles of Surplus Disposal and Consultative Obligations.' Aid contributions had to result in "additional consumption" in the recipient countries, meaning they would not interfere with domestic production and consumption in recipient countries or existing patterns of trade. The new policies of the AoA were to be implemented in 1996 (Clapp 2004, p. 1440).

the Uruguay Round, especially when the country concerned has not gained in net terms in other sectors (The Impact of the Uruguay Round 1995).

By raising international food prices and increasing North/South trade, the Uruguay Round may have also played a role in increasing the need for crisis-based food assistance. In the developing world, market openness incentivized production of non-traditional fruits and vegetables rather than staple crops (Da Silva & Baker 2009, p. 1) Globalization increased western year-round demand for fresh and semi-processed fruits, vegetables and fish for which many developing countries have the appropriate climate (Henson & Cranfield 2009, p. 16, 17). These food products also commanded higher prices on foreign markets. While these new exports had the potential to provide increased capital to developing countries, they also decreased the market appeal of planting staple crops. As a result, trade liberalization made developing countries more import-dependent for basic food products, more export dependent for agricultural income and more vulnerable overall to bad harvests or price shocks (Da Silva & Baker 2009, p. 2).

Development aid in general and food aid in specific dropped during the 90s.<sup>12</sup> Donor commitments to the WFP decreased by 50% over this period (Clay, Pillai, Benson 1998, p. 7). Where it had once represented a major portion of development aid, food aid, once one third of US total development aid, dropped to 4% of total international aid (Ibid, p. 7). Despite the sharp decline in the use of food redistribution as a development tool, its use as a reaction to conflict and crisis increased. In the 1960s, 20% of food aid resources were used for emergency situations, but by 2005, 64% of food aid donations fulfilled this purpose (Smillie 2009). This change reflects that neoliberal agendas like that of the Uruguay Round exacerbated poverty in the developing world.

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<sup>12</sup> The FAC cut its donor commitment levels in 1995 back down to 5.4 million tons (Clay, Pillai, Benson 1998). By 1999 commitments dropped to 4.9 million tons (Hanrahan and Canada, 2013, p. 1).



But the emerging neoliberal ideology also reframed how actors thought about and prioritized aspects of food security (Jarosz 2014). First of all, discourses about global food supply radically changed in the 90s. In the 1970s when the term food security was coined, it highlighted concerns about global food production. By the 90s, it was determined that enough food was being produced to feed the world population, eliminating Malthusian scenarios in which population growth exceeds supply growth (Essex 2014, p. 272). Instead the issue of hunger and food insecurity was attributed to inequality at the individual and household level (Marzedda-Mlynarska 2013, p. 34). Food security was not an issue of supply and demand, nor was it necessarily about rich countries versus poor countries. It was about inequality. Liberal policies intended to correct food access issues through the opening of the world market (Jarosz 2014, p. 179). Whereas earlier discourses were concerned with state development and addressing food needs on the national level, now the focus turned to the individual, targeting poverty eradication by focusing on vulnerabilities at the local, regional or household as opposed to national levels. At the World Food Summit in 1996, food security was redefined as the situation, “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (International Fund for Agriculture Development 2012).

As a part of this discourse shift, at the World Food Summit in 1996, the FAO proposed distinguishing between food aid and food assistance. Food assistance was described as involving, “public interventions by governments or NGOs directly providing food or subsidizing acquisition of food within a regional or national economy,” (Clay, Pillai, Benson 1998, p. 9), while food aid could be either programmatic in nature involving, “commodities provided directly to the recipient government or its agent for sales on local market” or geared towards relief, meaning food is “freely distributed” or it may involve a “cash medium” (Ibid, p. 9). Food assistance discourses spoke of “interventions” as well as focus on “household food security” (Ibid, p. 9, 10). The FAO also specified that program food aid, in which commodities are

provided directly to recipient governments for sale on local markets, would not qualify as food assistance, thereby discouraging its continued practice (Ibid, p. 43, 44).

At the UNDP during the mid 90s, food security was reconceived as a human security and the right to food was recognized as a universal right. When a country is denying its people a universal right, the international community can justify intervention on the people's behalf (Marzeda-Mlynarska 2013, p. 41). The acceptance of food security as a universal right empowered NGOs and IOs to act as the legitimate distributors and definers of appropriate normative food aid. It discouraged developed countries, including the US, from engaging in bilateral aid and identified multilateral aid organizations as the most legitimate arbiters of food aid (Fox 2007). By contrast the unilateral intervention by an individual country, for example the US, could be perceived as an attempt to interfere and "police" the world.

Privatization policies, such as those advanced by international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF as part of trade and capital liberalization, decreased national sovereignty of aid recipient countries. Many developing countries were pressured to privatize their agricultural and food-processing sectors, and they were pushed to sell off food stock reserves. These privatization policies contributed to a loss of national sovereignty by leaving national food production open to outside investment from western companies and financial interests in the form of MNCs (Jarosz 2014). In addition, by reducing national food reserves, developing countries were less able to regulate food supplies and more sensitive to international supply and price shocks. They came to depend on foreign capital to produce food and on food assistance from multilateral organizations to intervene in the event of crises.

By refocusing attention from the needs of governments to the needs and vulnerabilities of individuals, conflict-driven food assistance policies de-emphasized notions of sovereignty and responsibility for donor and recipient countries alike. Donor countries were urged to give multilaterally and to defer to IOs and NGOs as the true judges of human rights and needs. Recipient countries were weakened in their ability to address domestic needs as well as their

rights to resist international policy changes and crisis intervention. In a sense, food aid became simultaneously more micro and more macro. As global actors asserted their responsibility to address the needs of individuals, nation-states became unnecessary and outdated intermediaries.

Another type of non-state actor becoming more involved in international food policy is the multinational corporation (MNC). Multinational food companies are becoming powerful and wealthy stakeholders in international agricultural development. Changes in the attitudes and actions of these companies may be indicative of and influential to general changes in food policy. The lack of protest lobbying by the American-based, privately owned agribusiness, Cargill, to recently proposed food aid reforms in the US (House of Representatives 2013, p. 3), raises the question of the role of MNCs in the food aid debate.

Cargill is one of the four major grain trading global food conglomerates, which, along with Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Bunge, and Louis Dreyfus are known collectively as the “ABCD” of agri-food.<sup>13</sup> “ABCD” reportedly sold over half of the food purchased by the US government for in-kind food aid between 2004 and 2007. Between 1995 and 2005, Cargill alone won contracts worth \$1.09 billion to sell grain for the Food for Peace Program (Clapp 2009, p. 135). Food MNCs like these have vastly expanded their interests, through mergers and acquisitions, in the developed and developing worlds across all levels of food production, from seed to supermarket (Ibid, p. 4). Today, Cargill and ADM control over 40% of all US grain exports (Clapp 2009, p. 135). As countries have been encouraged to privatize and sell off their food buffer stocks, private agribusinesses like the ABCD and major grain traders have amassed large food reserves and storage facilities (Paul and Wahlberg 2008).

Agribusinesses have also partnered with NGOs in international development. Cargill, for example, which works in 67 countries (Cargill 2015), became involved in 2013 in an initiative to

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<sup>13</sup> ADM, Bunge and Cargill are all headquartered in the US, while Louis Dreyfus is headquartered in Amsterdam, however the interests of these four companies are increasingly global.

build food banks throughout India, in partnership with the India Food Banking Network (Haryana's First Food Bank 2013). Cargill has also partnered with NGO and humanitarian aid agency, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE)<sup>14</sup> (Cargill and CARE Renew Effort to Fight Hunger 2013). In 2008 CARE began a \$10 million initiative in partnership with Cargill aimed at fighting global poverty and improving food security in developing countries. In addition to other activities, the program focuses on improving production capacity of small-scale farms. CARE CEO Helene Gayle commented that, "We have learned about the importance of agricultural best practices, quality seed and quality animal feed from Cargill" (Ibid 2013).

Programs such as these indicate the growing emphasis on partnerships between private sector and NGO/IO actors, although such partnerships often lead to unlikely bedfellows. CARE, for example, has been an outspoken actor in rejecting US in-kind food aid policy, specifically the practice of monetization.<sup>15</sup> CARE also stopped accepting any food aid that it felt was closely tied to the commercial interests of the donor country, including PL 480's Title 1 concessional sales programs and surplus disposal programs. Foregoing these programs deprives CARE over \$45 million worth of funding annually (House of Representatives 2013, p. 10). As such CARE represents a formidable protest of US in-kind food aid programs by an organization that was ostensibly born and came of age in parallel with the US food aid system. In its outright rejection of in-kind food aid, CARE's choice to partner with a company that continues to profit from in-kind food aid seems problematic. Cargill and other agri-businesses are also long-time

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<sup>14</sup> CARE's history in many ways parallels that of food aid. Founded as the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe in 1945 to contribute to relief efforts in postwar Europe (O'Keefe, Drew, Bailey & Ford 1991, p. 1), CARE then became intertwined with PL 480, Food for Peace, in the 50s and 60s as one of the primary organizations delivering food from the US to developing countries, changing its name to Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (Ibid, p. 2). It became more internationally active in other donor countries in the 1970s and 80s (Ibid, p. 3), as in-kind aid normalized, adding offices throughout North America and Europe.

<sup>15</sup> Monetization programs transfer food commodities to NGOs. The NGOs can then distribute the food within a developing country in which they work. But more often, as the NGOs work is not directly related to food distribution, the organization is free to sell the food on the market in that country and use the proceeds to fund the NGOs programs and administrative costs.

competitors with the family farm business model, and their interest in agricultural improvements in the developing world seems challenging to decouple from an interest in expanding seed and fertilizer sales, as well as food production and food processing in these regions. Despite its defiance of in-kind food aid, CARE is enabling the same actors to shift to new types of exploitative export and trade advantages in the developing world. As in-kind food aid have diminished since the 1990s, supporting agricultural aid as well as local procurement programs could become a profitable alternative for major agribusinesses looking to grow in the developing world through the sale of seed and fertilizer as well as the maintenance of some of the world's largest food stocks.

#### PART FOUR: The EU as a Case Study of Food Aid Conformity, Reshaping and Rejection

EU food aid policy demonstrates initial reluctance to the norm of in-kind aid redistribution, eventual conformity, followed by pushback against the norm and the creation of a replacement norm. The changes in the EU's food aid priorities from the mid 1980s until 2000 show how post Cold War power dynamics empowered growing self-awareness within the growing EU. The EU began to see itself as a leader and counterweight to the US in international development policy. Constructivists explain that the identity of a polity is socially constructed and in flux. It is therefore changeable if the people acting within the polity decide to alter it. (Chatterjee 2005, p. 87).

The EEC reluctantly embarked upon food aid as a Community-wide effort in 1968 in response to the first FAC (Cathie 1990, p. 459). The then six member EEC was not eager to sign on to policies that pushed it to provide the developing world with foodstuffs, because the EEC as a whole, despite successful postwar recovery of its agricultural sector, was primarily a food-importing region. Surplus production within the EEC was generally sold at a subsidized price within the Community first. The establishment of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 1960 formalized the three governing principles of EEC Agriculture by 1962: market unity, community preference and financial solidarity. For example, CAP strongly supported market expansion for agriculturally strong countries such as France and the Netherlands, while protecting the artificially high prices of less agriculturally dynamic countries such as Germany from international competition (Garzon 2007, p. 1, 2).

When national contributions to food aid around the world decreased during the World Food Crisis, the EEC functioned like a multilateral aid organization for European countries, and therefore EEC donations overtook individual member-state donations for the first time (Cathie

1990, p. 459). CAP subsidies, intended to maintain price controls and regulate production throughout the Community, resulted in production increases, and by the late 70s, the EEC became a food-exporting region. Although CAP was never formally linked to EEC food aid policies (EC Food Security and Food Programme 1995/96), this change in production justified conformity to surplus-dumping<sup>16</sup> programs similar to other export-driven countries. The first year that the EEC shifted from a primarily import to an export focused polity was 1979 (Germanwatch 2004, p. 18). This was also the same year that the European Commission proposed the formulation of a real food aid policy, which would, “transform food aid into an independent policy aimed at development objectives” (Commission of the European Communities 1986). As a result, by the 1980s, the EEC contributed 20% of world food aid (Cathie 1990, p. 459).

Throughout the 1980s the EU pursued much more aggressive cereal export programs to compete with other export-driven countries, such as the US and Australia (Germanwatch 2004, p. 19, 20). These measures included surplus dumping food aid programs. In addition, the EU focused its export efforts on Africa, which it had long considered a region within its own sphere of influence. Between the mid 70s and the end of the 1980s, Africa greatly increased agricultural imports from the EU (Ibid, p. 20).

However, EEC food aid rhetoric during the 1980s contradicted norm conformity. In 1983 the Community discussed food aid as, “endeavoring to provide for increasing the food self-sufficiency of the countries concerned by supporting their efforts towards autonomous and self-sustained development of their economies, particularly by strengthening their food farming” (Commission of the European Communities 1986, p. 4). In other words food aid policy claimed

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<sup>16</sup> Dumping of agricultural commodities is defined as the situation when, “the selling price in the importing country is below the production costs in the exporting country plus a reasonable amount for administration, marketing and overhead costs as well as profits (Germanwatch 2004, p. 7).

to focus more on building self-reliance and strengthening the agriculture of recipient countries, but in practice the EEC was driven by low-cost surplus disposal in the form of food aid and subsidized trade.

This disconnect between rhetoric and practice developed into slow reforms. During the 1980s the EEC began to advocate the use of triangular operations.<sup>17</sup> Triangular operations were recognized as an important way to strengthen regional agricultural markets while participating in in-kind food aid (Commission of the European Communities 1986, p. 4). Although Community policy stipulated that whenever possible, “products supplied as food aid originate within the EEC and are either purchased on the Community market or are drawn from intervention stocks,” and Article 2 of Council Regulation No. 3331/82 governing food aid required that products to be used for food aid be, “mobilized in accordance with the rules and the procedures laid down under the common organizations of markets,” the policy also permitted that, “in an emergency or if the products are not available on the Common market, the products supplied as aid may be purchased in another developing country...”(Ibid, p. 12). By July 1986, the Commission proposed repealing Regulation 3331/82 in recognition of the potential benefits of increasing triangular operations and detangling food aid from the CAP principle of market unity (Ibid, p. 13). At the EEC’s advice, triangular operations also became an acceptable method for FAC donations that same year (Ibid, 14), showing that the EEC was gaining more weight in international negotiations.

The EEC also began to support some cash transfers in place of in-kind aid through the passing of Council Regulation no. 1755/84. Article one stated:

The Community shall, where conditions so justify, implement alternative operations in place of deliveries of food aid for developing countries. These operations shall be aimed at supporting, by means of available funds, the preparation and implementation of a food aid strategy or other measures to strengthen these countries' food security and to

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<sup>17</sup> Triangular trade described a food aid strategy in which products are purchased in one developing country to be delivered as aid in a neighboring country.



encourage them to increase their degree of self-reliance with regard to food..."(Commission of the European Communities 1986, p. 15).<sup>18</sup>

It is unclear whether parallel reforms of in-kind food aid in the EEC and the FAC were spearheaded by the FAC or if the agent of reform was the EEC. Regardless of the particular norm entrepreneur, food aid in the 1980s certainly began to drift out of the unilateral control of the United States.

Actually reforming or fully deconstructing normative in-kind food aid proved to be a slow process. Despite the official adoption of new Community policies in 1996 that supported the transition to Local and Regional Purchases (LRP) (Lentz, Passarelli & Barrett 2013), by 1998, 45% of the EU food aid budget still funded EU-sourced<sup>19</sup> foodstuffs, mostly cereals, and transport costs (European Union Food Aid and Food Security Programme 1998/99, p. 27), while the much discussed foreign exchange aid represented only 18% of the budget in 1998 and 21% in 1999 (Ibid, p. 28). The EU planned to continue using in-kind aid, but reserved its use for, "prolonged emergencies, post-crisis situations, and rehabilitation," and would distribute it freely to vulnerable groups, rather than tying it to EU interests (Ibid 1998/99, p. 27).

In the early 90s, the EU institutionally separated its food aid development program from emergency humanitarian aid, both of which had previously been overseen jointly by the Food Aid Unit of the Directorate General for Development. To deal with the latter, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) was established in 1992. This institutional reshuffling preceded the policy shift toward emergency aid, which came in 1996 through the new food aid regulations (European Union Food Aid and Food Security Programme 1998/99, p. 21).

Accordingly in 1997 the EU changed its contributions to the WFP to gradually reduce

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<sup>18</sup> So called "substitution" actions replaced food transfers with funds that could be used to buy foodstuffs or agricultural products like fertilizer and seeds, or to improve food stock storage facilities.

<sup>19</sup> After the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993, the European Community (EC) succeeded the EEC, and the European Union (EU) was founded. Although the EU did not fully succeed the EC until 2009, I will reference the EU for all post-1993 policy changes.

development-based aid through this multilateral organization in favor of allocating more funds to the EU's own International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) and the Program to Support Refugees and Relocated Persons (PRRO) (Ibid, p. 34).

The adoption of these new EU policies coincided with three events: the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, the entering into effect of the non-binding AoA as part of the WTO, and FAO's 1995 projections which predicted world cereal stocks at their lowest level in twenty years. Similar to the late 60s and early 70s, this combination of pressures from global food summits, trade negotiations and food supply crises pushed the EU to reconsider its food aid policies. Whereas in the 70s, pressures pushed the EU closer to the US system and norm conformity, the events of the 90s pushed the EU to challenge the US system and to reject a norm.

The food supply crisis in 1995 caused the market price of wheat to rise by 40% in one year. As a result, in December 1995 the European Commission began to tax wheat exports (EC Food Security and Food Programme 1995/96, p. 10). The EU also sought to reduce arable land in the EU from 12 to 10 percent. Despite the crisis and the global reductions in food aid by 35% (Ibid, p. 10), the EU claimed to be the only donor to maintain or increase its commitments during the mid 90s (Ibid, p. 11). This claim validated the EU's growing reliance on cash subsidies and triangular purchases. It showed the stability and flexibility that these reforms permitted. One of the known flaws with in-kind aid is that it fluctuates according to market supply. When supply is low and prices are high (precisely when need among vulnerable populations increases and access decreases), supply of aid from developed countries drops. When prices are low and supply is high, dumping often occurs, which decreases the selling price for locally grown food available on developing markets (Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 131).

The EU's food aid reforms can be understood according to a constructivist, liberal and realist lens. According to the constructivist lens one could argue that EU reforms represent a moral values-based shift, from a system that gives the donor country the economic advantage to

one that genuinely aims to place the needs of individuals and recipient countries first and to facilitate methods believed to be most likely to economically lift people in developing countries out of poverty. This is the argument most often presented by the EU to explain reforms and advocate for their adoption by other countries. This argument also demonstrates the growing influence and identity of NGOs, which had already begun recommending cash transfers as more efficient and less disruptive to the market than in-kind transfers, as credible and influential sources for policy development and moral influence. However, the EU's other agricultural economic practices at this time, a continuation of agricultural subsidies through CAP and surplus-disposal programs, indicate that morals did not consistently or completely motivate EU agricultural and food aid policies.

Secondly, this shift can be interpreted as part of a developing EU interest in exporting its own economic model to the rest of the world, in this case by exporting the idea of both a supranational polity and CAP to other regions (Cathie 1990, p. 459). This liberal argument shows an interest by the EU to act as a model for regional economic integration. In this understanding, the EU's goal is not necessarily to use triangular operations as a replacement for North/South trade. In fact, during this time, the EU encouraged the production of non-traditional and exotic crops for export in the Global South, and the EU became the primary importer of such products from sub-Saharan Africa. Triangular operations were, then, meant to strengthen regional interdependence for basic crops, especially those pertaining to regional diets, which, as the EU had already recognized in the 1980s, it could not reasonably provide through in-kind food aid. Crises are a perfect time to encourage regional economic integration. The EU itself had been born through crisis, through its formation vis-à-vis post-war economic integration facilitated by the Marshall Plan and the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community. This also explains why the EU moved away from using food for social and economic development, focusing instead on crisis intervention. Regional purchase or triangular purchase during a crisis could facilitate or act as the critical juncture for regional integration. The EU

could represent itself as the successful model for regional integration, and therefore it would be seen internationally as a polity with the ability and the legitimacy to influence the actions and behaviors of other regions.

Third, one must consider a realist interest-based argument. Cash and foreign exchange credits increased developing countries' purchasing powers. Although the Uruguay Round discouraged agricultural subsidies, in the following years both the US and the EU found new loopholes to increase and justify the use of domestic subsidies. By focusing its own attention away from in-kind aid and reducing the number of countries receiving EU development food aid, the EU was able to criticize US practices regarding food aid without drawing attention to its own agricultural subsidies programs. Especially in Africa, where the EU perceived a geographic and historical advantage, the EU would rather subsidize trade than promote dependency through food aid. With the US continuing in-kind food aid in Africa, the EU perceived a threat to its economic sphere of influence. As such, food aid reforms by the EU in the 1990s may have merely represented a change in export strategy from subsidized aid to subsidized trade. With the end of the Cold War, the potential unipolarity of the US, and the third wave of democratization taking place in the EU's own backyard, the expanding EU saw international development as an area where it could potentially compete with US influence in the developing world and act as a counterbalancing global power. The EU could not match the US in quantity of in-kind food aid provided to the developing world, it could provide "kinder" food aid.

The Doha Development Round, for which trade-negotiations began in 2001 and which have yet to reach a conclusion, has become the forum where the EU has asserted growing authority in normative food aid reform. The US and the EU not only continue to debate agricultural subsidies, but the EU has shown international leadership by pushing its own agenda. As a result of pressure from the EU at the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong in 2005, it was determined that the current round of negotiations would resolve to end commercial displacement, as well as the practices of in-kind food aid and monetization of food aid through

NGOs except in specific circumstances where such aid is deemed by the international community to be the most appropriate response. Cash-based food aid would, however, be placed in a so called “safe box,” thereby protecting the EU aid model from potential future disciplines by the WTO (Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 133).

At the start of the Doha Development Round in 2001, 60% of food aid was given in-kind, as the US, Canada, Australia, Japan and Argentina all still conformed to the normative policies supported by the US. The remaining 40% of “untied”<sup>20</sup> cash-based aid came mostly from the EU (Food Trade and Nutrition Coalition 2005, p. 7). The EU claims its policies are more sustainable and that they reinforce empowerment (Ibid, p. 10) and good governance in recipient countries, by placing development projects back in the hands of national governments (Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 125). The untied, cash-based concept of EU aid has been embraced by developing countries as well as many NGOs and civil society, and it is recognized as reflecting the sovereignty of receiving governments (Food Trade and Nutrition Coalition, p. 8).

However, EU criticism of the US in-kind aid model is not exclusively motivated by humanitarianism. Just as during the Uruguay Round, the EU has been criticized at the Doha Round for its continued maintenance of agricultural export subsidies. The EU therefore advocates “parallelism” - global recognition that not only direct agricultural subsidies such as CAP, but also US in-kind food aid, qualifies as a form of export subsidy. The US disagrees that the two practices are equal in their ability to distort trade (Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 132), citing that food aid represented less than 2% of developing country food imports in 2004 and about .2% of the global grain trade, and is therefore insignificant to the agricultural market (Barrett & Maxwell 2005 (b), p. 106).

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<sup>20</sup> Untied aid refers to transfers of cash to developing countries that do not force food aid recipients to become dependent on or feel pressured to purchase goods or services from the donor country. Additionally untied aid can refer to policies that completely separate domestic interests in the donor country, be they farming, processing or shipping interests, from aid and development programs.

## PART FIVE: Food Aid in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Consideration of Current US Policy

With so many new actors rising to the forefront of international food aid since the 1990s in support for new food and agriculture policies, the US initially appears to be rejecting emerging norms. The EU has offered itself as the new norm entrepreneur of cash-based, untied food aid programs. It successfully applied pressure to countries such as Australia, Canada, Denmark and France to begin reform of their aid programs by 2004/2005 to include more local purchases (Clay 2006, p. 121)<sup>21</sup>. IOs and NGOs working within the food security sector have transformed from instruments to advance American policies to actors that actively challenge and reject normative food aid. MNCs have been able to play both models of food aid, enough for some, like Cargill to remove themselves from the political debate altogether in favor of private partnerships with non-state actors.

The US is often criticized for being the only western country still practicing primarily in-kind food redistribution. While the global pool of donor countries collectively procured 58% of food donations from developing countries in 2004 (Clay 2006, p. 120) and by 2014 these countries sourced little or no food from their own domestic markets (Lentz, Barrett 2014), the US continues to rely on domestic procurement. In 2004 the US sourced less than 1% of its food aid donations from developing countries. This is significant, as the US continues to fund and provide over half of global food aid (Clay 2006, p. 120).

However, US political leaders are actively pursuing conformity to new forms of food aid. Former Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, along with current President Barack Obama have all advocated food aid reforms. Bush included cash-for-food programs in his 2006 and 2007

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<sup>21</sup> In 2008 Canada completely untied its food aid program by eliminating most of its bilateral aid program in favor of multilateral aid and emphasized local procurement in developing countries (Smillie 2009, p. 194).

budgets, proposing that 25% of US food aid funds be redirected to a cash-based system.

Congress rejected both proposals (Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 133), but Bush was certain to reference them in a speech to the UN General Assembly in 2007 saying:

“Feeding the hungry has long been a special calling for my nation. Today, more than half the world’s food assistance comes from America. We send emergency food stocks to starving people from camps in Sudan to slums in -- around the world. I’ve proposed an innovative initiative to alleviate hunger under which America would purchase the crops of local farmers in Africa and elsewhere, rather than shipping in food from the developed world. This would help build up local agriculture and break the cycle of famine in the developing world -- and I urge our United States Congress to support this initiative.” (Bush 2007).

He repeated his call for this “innovative proposal” for cash-based food aid in his final State of the Union address in 2008 (Bush 2008). Although it may seem questionable to refer to a policy as “innovative” when it has been practiced by the second largest food aid contributor, the EU, for well over a decade and is being actively employed by nearly all other donor countries. When the new Farm Bill (the legislation in which food aid policy has generally been regulated) was adopted in mid 2008, it did include a small pilot program for LRP under the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. The pilot program used LRP to purchase food for emergency and non-emergency food needs in developing countries between 2008-2012 (Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 133, 134). Although small, it represents a real attempt to begin to gently reform US policy.

Former President Clinton has also spoken out in favor of food aid reforms. In the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, 90,000 metric tons of American-sourced food was sent under the auspices of Food for Peace and the Food for Progress aid programs. This donation represented three quarters of the total aid delivered to the country, but such massive in-kind deliveries were later accused of undermining the efforts of local farmers struggling to compete on the market (Kushner 2012). Speaking in his capacity as UN Special Envoy to Haiti, Clinton stated:

The United States has followed a policy, until the last year or so when we started rethinking it, that we rich countries that produce a lot of food should sell it to poor countries and relieve them of the burden of producing their own food, so, thank

goodness, they can leap directly into the industrial era...It has not worked. It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked (Ibid).

Under the Obama administration, the Farm Bill of 2014 has had the most success to date of reforming US food aid. It set aside \$80 million for LRP in the case of emergencies. The new legislation also claims to limit the use of monetization. However, this reform seems inconsequential considering the total budget for Title II food aid in 2014 was \$1.47 billion (USAID 2014).

The bi-partisan Corker-Coons Bill, otherwise known as the Food for Peace Reform Act of 2014, proposed in June 2014, would expand these reforms. Cash and LRP food aid reforms proposed for FY 2014 promised to feed up to 4 million additional people and to arrive to areas of need faster (Marshall 2014). Senator Corker explained, "Congress needs to find ways to be more efficient and effective with every dollar" (Office of U.S. Senator Christopher Coons of Delaware 2014). The bill claims to free up \$440 million in the FY 2014 Budget (Ibid 2014). Discourse at this time, likely as a result of budget tightening, focuses mostly on cost-cutting, rather than emphasizing the moral or market-related concerns. The act would also transfer the authority for the Food for Peace Program from the farm bill to the Foreign Assistance Act – a tangible step in the policy of untying US aid from domestic agricultural interests (Ibid 2014). Interestingly in 2009, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, transferred the budgetary functions of USAID, which oversees much of Food for Peace, from the Agency itself to the State Department (House of Representatives 2013, p. 10), a complete reversal of Kennedy's efforts in 1960 to disconnect development from diplomacy.

In a Congressional Hearing on June 12, 2013 bipartisan supporters of food aid reform presented the reasons why a change in US food aid is necessary. They argued that historically high prices of agricultural exports between 2009 and 2013, as well as an overall drop in food aid as a percentage of agricultural exports, which "now accounts for less than 1/2 percent of net farm income," mean that food aid as a farm subsidy, "can no longer be defended" (House of



Representatives 2013, p. 1).<sup>22</sup> In addition, the rise in the cost of shipping on American cargo ships means that 49% of Food for Peace funds since 2003 have been spent on transportation costs and only 40% on food (Ibid, p. 3). The hearing pointed out that whereas food was once sent bilaterally to support mostly stable Asian countries, 82% is now sent to crises in sub-Saharan Africa, and 78% supports disaster relief efforts, primarily via NGOs multilateral efforts such as the Red Cross and WFP (Ibid, p. 8). All of this is intended to illustrate that the nature of every aspect of US food aid has changed, except the Cold War-era legislation, which governs it.

The most influential domestic audience that legislators must address regarding food aid reform is the so-called “iron triangle.” The iron triangle consists of the three lobbies most affected by in-kind food aid: domestic food producers, NGOs participating in monetization, and the cargo-shipping lobby (Clapp and Fuchs 2009, p. 126). With some of the major food lobbies such as the agribusiness Cargill, and the National Farmers Union endorsing reforms, and recognition of how tiny the percentage of food purchased for aid is today, the farm lobby seems to have lost its steam. Regardless, food aid legislation in 2014 and 2015 continue to reassure the American public that no less than 55 percent of the requested \$1.4 billion in total funding for emergency food assistance in IDA will be used for the purchase, transport, and related costs of U.S. commodities (USAID 2014). This speaks to role that food aid has developed in providing a “warm glow” to the American people through the sense of satisfaction that American food feeds the world (Food Trade and Nutrition Coalition 2005, p. 4). With major NGOs such as CARE and Oxfam supporting reforms (Chavkin 2014), the lobbying efforts of NGOs that do still rely on monetization have also been weakened.

Therefore the primary roadblock to US food aid reform appears to be the cargo lobby, which has presented the maintenance of current in-kind food aid as a matter of survival for its industry. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) study in 2009 found that because of

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<sup>22</sup> By contrast, between 1955 and 1990, 34% of all wheat exports were part of the food aid program (Diven 2001).

reduced shipping costs local procurement aid to sub-Saharan Africa costs 34% less than in-kind aid shipped from the US (Chavkin 2014). The Pentagon claims that food aid would only effect eight to eleven merchant marine ships and 360 to 495 mariners' jobs, and it has issued reassurance that the Maritime Security Program, which has funded the military viability of U.S.-flagged commercial ships since 1996, would continue (Ibid). However, the shipping lobby continues to argue that changing food aid would devastate the industry and "reduce military sealift capacity" (Ibid). The president of the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, which represents 32 transport workers unions stated, "If you start hollowing out the U.S. merchant marine, and you start with eight to 10 ships, its going to call into question whether merchant marine operators have a viable future in the U.S." (Ibid). As a result of the resolve of the cargo lobby, reforms in 2013 were defeated in Congress by a vote of 220 to 203 (Ibid).

Unlike other policy stalemates of recent Congresses, food aid support and opposition are both bipartisan efforts.<sup>23</sup> Whereas Republicans opposing the reform are drawn to arguments about military preparedness and the importance of supporting US farming, labor Democrats, especially Congress members from states with large shipping industries, also played a crucial role in defeating the reform (Chavkin 2014).<sup>24</sup> Unlike big agriculture or NGOs, the cargo lobby is not likely see any potential benefit from supporting food aid reforms. As long as enough members of Congress remain loyal to the interests of the cargo lobby, US food aid reforms will be gradual and limited at best. This was demonstrated in late 2014 when the cargo lobby nearly succeeded in pushing through an addendum to otherwise unrelated legislation which would have increased the food aid cargo preference from covering 50% of all food aid shipments to 75% (Krepp 2013).

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<sup>23</sup> Not only have president from both parties supported food aid reform, but the top-ranking members of each party voted in support of the 2013 proposal, which was then defeated.

<sup>24</sup> The Center for Public Integrity found that Congress members, regardless of party, who received contributions from maritime unions or other organizations within the cargo lobby, voted 83 to 29 against food aid reforms (Ibid).

## CONCLUSION

Despite the domestic interest-based impasse on sweeping food aid reform, it is clear that much of the political elite in the Executive Branch, Congress, as well as government agencies such as USAID, GAO and the Pentagon, advocate conformity to new norms in food-related aid. This indicates that an interest in norm conformity among international actors may be easier to obtain than the ability to pursue and realize reforms that impact more localized actors within a given country. In the 1960s individual EU member-states resisted food aid policies that would have challenged domestic actors. However, in the 1970s, the EU was able to create a brand new Community-wide aid donation program. By acting at the supranational level the EU was able to conform to international pressures without disrupting local lobbies. Again in the 80s and 90s, the EU was more successful at changing food aid rhetoric than it was at eliminating surplus dumping or subsidies programs that were supported by domestic interest groups. Similarly, in the late 50s and early 60s, when Eisenhower and Kennedy wanted to transform in-kind food aid from a US policy to an international norm, they had to change the discourse at home before addressing an international audience. International actors are likely motivated to conform to global norms while domestic actors resist them, precisely because norms are often irrational and because competing values are at the heart of norm contestation. International norms are created with the understanding that international actors are under pressure to cooperate with one another and may be negotiating other, seemingly unrelated factors. The inclusion of the FAC within the IGA illustrates this point.

If one extrapolates this trend to the current American food aid debate, one could conclude that broad, sweeping rhetorical changes by the international political elite will be met with slow, creeping reform at the local level. Changes in US food aid are not reflective of the

party in power or the individual in office. Despite external pressure from the EU, IOs and other non-state actors that cash-based aid is cheaper and more effective for everyone involved, it is unlikely that international pressure will persuade the cargo-lobby to surrender its interests. It is therefore much more challenging to repeal domestic interest-based policies such as the Cargo Preference Act, than it would be to create entirely new policies layered on top of the old ones. Through the creation of new policies such as the LRP pilot program and re-branding of food aid to promote cash-based aid as “moral” aid, American political elite interested in norm conformity may hope to wait out the current generation of lobbyists and legislators preventing reform, while gradually building the foundation for a new food aid program on top of the existing one.

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