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Why Food Aid Persists and Food Security Recedes

Organisational Adaptation of a Canadian NGO

McDougall, Corrie Lynn S.

Publication date:
2008

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

McDougall, C. L. S. (2008). *Why Food Aid Persists and Food Security Recedes: Organisational Adaptation of a Canadian NGO*. Institut for Historie, Internationale Studier og Samfundsforhold, Aalborg Universitet. Spirit PhD Series No. 15

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SPIRIT
Doctoral Programme

Aalborg University
Fibigerstraede 2-97
DK-9220 Aalborg East

Phone: +45 9940 7195
Fax: +45 9635 0044

Mail: spirit@ihis.aau.dk

**Why Food Aid Persists and
Food Security Recedes:
Organisational Adaptation of
a Canadian NGO**

Corrie Lynn McDougall

SPIRIT PhD Series

Thesis no. 15



ISSN: 1903-7783

Ph.D. Dissertation

**Why Food Aid Persists and Food Security Recedes:
Organisational Adaptation of a Canadian NGO**



Marcel Duchamps '*Anemic Cinema*' (1926)

Corrie Lynn S. McDougall

Aalborg University

Development, Innovation and International Political Economy Research

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Abstract

Northern-based non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) have increasingly gained an important role in alleviating hunger worldwide. Approaches to fighting hunger first began in the 1950s on a bilateral basis and were primarily centred on the shipment of food aid from nations with agricultural surpluses to less industrialised nations.

However, in light of these efforts, the last fifty years has seen an increase in the number of persons suffering from hunger across the globe. This has led to an expansion in literature questioning the effectiveness of food-based approaches to end hunger, as well as the role of NGDOs in this process. Much of the research points to development based on securing local food supplies as a more sustainable development practice, instead of the more immediate responses associated with the provision of food aid. As a consequence, NGDOs have sought new approaches to combat hunger in their programming strategies.

Historically, Canada has been a major provider of food aid as a means to end hunger, with Canadian NGDOs playing a key role in this process. The majority of the development initiatives by Canadian NGDOs centre on long-term development strategies based on principles of improving local food supplies. However, today there remains one NGDO, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank that has maintained food aid as a primary strategy and continues to expand its development program.

The empirical context of the dissertation is the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Canada's leading development organisation in the provision of food aid. The development of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, since its establishment in 1983, has been studied within the context of the changing perspectives on fighting global hunger within the international aid system. A combined framework, based on the major theoretical perspectives of both Resource Dependency Theory and Institutional Theory within organisational studies, has been employed to analyse the stories of key informants involved in these events and therefore advance an explanatory narrative of the changes in the organisation in response to the aid system.

This study suggests that the main themes within this narrative may be of explanatory value in studying processes of organizational change in Northern-based NGDOs involved in hunger alleviation. Moreover, the loose set of themes conceived from the interpretation of semi-structured interviews from an assortment of relevant informants can also be considered as providing a conceptual framework for further research both within these particular organisations and for broader comparative purposes.

The aim of this dissertation is to contribute with knowledge in two broad fields: (1) the role of Northern-based non-governmental development organisations and (2) the strategic and institutional processes that lead to changes in the organisational forms of these NGDOs.

Keywords: non-governmental organisations; international development aid; food aid; food security; neo-institutionalism; resource dependency

Acknowledgements

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes
You can steer yourself any direction you choose.
You're on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU are the *girl who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.
About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."
With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,
you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.

And you may not find any, you'll want to go down.
In that case, of course, you'll head straight out of town.
It's opener there in the wide-open air.
Out there things can happen and frequently do
to people as brainy and footsy as you.
And when things start to happen, don't worry.
Don't stew. Just go right along. You'll start happening too.

OH! THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

You can get so confused that you'll start in to race
down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace
and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,
headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.

Somehow you'll escape all that waiting and staying.
You'll find the bright places where Boom Bands are playing.
And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed!
(98 and 3 / 4 percent guaranteed.)

~*Doctor Seuss*~

I've had the pleasure of meeting many lovely people on this ride. Some gave me a lift when I was tired, others offered directions when I was lost and some just kept me company - to each of you, my deepest gratitude. A special shout out to Mammo Muchie, my supervisor who gently pushed me along, to Carsten, my "second supervisor", to Simon, my "technical advisor", and to my family who never stop cheering me on!

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List of Acronyms

AoA	Agreement on Agriculture
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AICT	Africa Inland Church of Tanzania
CFGB	Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DOSTANGO	Donor-State-NGO
FSPG	Food Security Policy Group
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GoC	Government of Canada
IFI	International Financial Institution
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAHMD	Program Against Hunger, Malnutrition and Disease
PM	Prime Minister
PWS&D	Presbyterian World Service & Development
UCC	United Church of Canada
WFP	World Food Program
WFS	World Food Summit

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

Northern-based Non-Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs) are becoming increasingly significant in the pursuit of hunger alleviation across the globe. Severe food shortages are currently affecting more than 820 million people in less industrialised countries.¹ In the past twenty-five years, there has been a significant increase in chronic malnutrition and the numbers of drought-inflicted areas have also risen. Climatic conditions are wrought with uncertainty and have resulted in a growing number of natural and manmade disasters. Cases of environmental degradation, forest extraction, decreasing biodiversity and increased conflict, have affected the climactic balance on many continents resulting in disasters such as flooding or persistent water scarcity. Chronic food shortages are an ever-growing reality.

Africa is the continent that has been most plagued by famine in the past half century and particularly south of the Sahara. Much of the problem stems from the fact that two-thirds of all Africans are deeply dependent on small-scale farming or animal grazing for their survival.² In Sub-Saharan Africa only 4% of the arable land is irrigated, as compared to 24% in Northern Africa and 37% in Asia.³ Furthermore, the vast majority of cropland is planted with native varieties and worked by hand, as bio-engineered and chemical alternatives are not affordable. According to the Compendium of Agricultural-Environmental Indicators (1989 – 2000), the agricultural GDP per agricultural worker is the lowest worldwide at US\$315.⁴ The FAO estimates the number of chronically undernourished people in Sub-Saharan Africa at 185.9 million people or 34% of the population.⁵

Ever since the 1950s, the favoured international response in dealing with hunger in less industrialised nations has been to send shipments of food aid. However, the debate surrounding this matter has been anything but simple. Practically since its inception, the topic of sending food aid overseas has run rampant with issues of dumping food, political and economic nepotism, and concerns over private sector interests to name a few.⁶

Shipping food aid was first initiated in North America, with Canada as the largest per capita supplier in the world. As a major food exporting country, it is consistently under international pressure to shoulder a significant portion of the global want during emergencies. Accordingly, Canada has often been ranked second (after the US) in its global food aid contributions to the World Food Program (WFP) the leading multilateral body dealing with hunger. In addition to these particulars, Canadians also have an expectation that the federal government will respond generously to regions that are in need.⁷

This expectation is in place due to Canada's historical involvement in the provision of food aid. Beginning in the mid-1950s, food aid from Canada was provided on a government-to-government basis. However it was not until the wake of a global food crisis in the early 1970s, that the Canadian government first undertook a review of the food aid policy. The policy had developed over time, and on an ad hoc basis according to the changing political and economic forces.⁸ The review criticized the government for its misuse of Canadian food aid and its value as a development resource, and resulted in a "crisis of confidence" during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Food aid was perceived as an "impossible conundrum", where continuing its provision was a highly controversial issue, while at the same time its complete elimination was not realistic considering the mounting numbers of global disasters.⁹

Consequently, in the 1980s the majority of the responsibility for providing Canadian food aid transferred to Canadian NGOs and multilateral channels. Many Canadian NGOs were established with a key focus on alleviating hunger in less industrialised countries. They sought various methods to accomplish this - from short-term food aid initiatives based on the principles of the right to food, to advocacy, to sustainable development projects focused on agriculture, water and education to name a few.

Today, Canadian NGOs are significant players in hunger alleviation. In times of emergency, they have the responsibility to provide effective and timely responses, while increasingly development programmes are based on principles of long-term

sustainability. They carry out both development and relief-oriented projects and have played a key role in the development of the global food aid system.

With that said, Canadian NGDOs have not escaped the criticisms associated with the provision of food aid. More specifically, food aid is often connected to fostering dependency, depressing local agricultural production, enabling less industrialised nations to avoid implementing much needed agricultural reform, and most recently as a challenge to biodiversity.¹⁰ In essence, NGDOs engaged in food aid practices have been scrutinized on the grounds that food aid continues to be related to socio-economic harms that stem from the pursuit of political and economic gains, rather than development goals. As a result, the vast majority of NGDOs in the sector have rejected food aid as a development tool, to instead focus on strategies considered to be longer-term and sustainable.

1.2 The Canadian Foodgrains Bank in the Pursuit to End Hunger

Today, there are approximately 15 international NGDOs from Canada involved in global hunger alleviation. However, as previously mentioned, due to the growing concern over the provision of food aid most Canadian NGDOs are focusing on strategies related to longer-term development initiatives, or advocacy work. Despite the debate over the possibility of greater dependency and economic peril as a result of providing food aid, one Canadian NGDO continues to focus the bulk of its resources on food aid as the means to eliminate hunger.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), a member-driven, non-profit organisation of 15¹ Canadian churches, is the leading food aid organisation in Canada. The CFGB was established in 1983 with the primary purpose of ending hunger through a strategy of

¹ During the study there were a total of 13 member churches associated with the CFGB. This changed shortly after the field world period. In Winnipeg on June 21, 2007, board members voted the Canadian Catholic Organisation for Development and Peace, and the Primate's World Relief & Development Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada into membership. For more info see: http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/news/527/canadian_foodgrains_bank_welcomes_new_members.aspx [accessed 08/01/08]

providing food from Canada to vulnerable regions. Today, it continues to pursue, strengthen and increase food aid as a key response to hunger alleviation worldwide.

There remain many concerns over the appropriateness of supplying food aid from Canada. Many of these problems are directly linked to the fact that the Government of Canada has maintained the age-old policy of tying food aid resources to the Canadian economy. Traditionally, a condition has been in place that requires that 90% of food aid provided by NDGOs must come from within its boundaries. In practical terms, this has been interpreted by some as the movement of Canadian commodity around the world under the pretext of food aid.¹¹

Another major issue associated with NDGOs shipping Canadian food aid is that Canada is one of the largest producers of genetically modified (GM) food stocks in the world. Since 2002, when shipments of food aid from Canada to drought-affected regions in southern Africa, were found to contain GM maize and thereby rejected, the issue of GM food aid has been of great interest to actors worldwide from the local to the global levels.¹² As 90% of food aid has come from the Canadian market, NGDOs cannot ensure that aid shipments are completely free from traces of GMOs. Consequently, countries that are in need have had to begin deciding whether or not to accept food aid in this form.¹³

A further concern has been the lack of timeliness in the shipping process. Overall, NGDOs are confronted with public pressure to respond efficiently in the face of growing emergencies, for instance during the Tsunami of 2004. However, because the Government of Canada (GoC) required the food aid to originate in Canada, it would take a minimum of 12 weeks before it could reach its destination. This practice has shown to be ineffective in terms of providing food aid during emergency situations, for example flash floods.

Another challenge for NGDOs is as a result of the many changes in international priorities and policies have occurred in the past two decades. One of the main changes involves a shift from food-based to nutrition-based approaches to fighting hunger. This

has meant that where the GoC previously supported food aid, to off-load surplus commodities while assisting vulnerable populations, it has been refocusing the approach towards the provision of micronutrients and vitamins.

In light of these concerns over food aid, it may come as no surprise that, although the key strategy employed by the CFGB is based on food aid, in the past decade, the organisation has begun to increase its efforts in a different direction. New initiatives regarding education on hunger, public policy programmes and new types of overseas programmes to fight hunger have emerged. The organisation has been involved in joint NGDO initiatives focusing on the global trade of agricultural commodities and global campaigns on the human right to food. Additionally, almost a decade ago, it spearheaded the formation of a working group of NGDOs with the function of pressuring the Canadian government to increase international support through promoting rural agricultural development in less industrialised countries. Most recently, the CFGB has begun to concentrate also on improving its communication with, and education of, its constituents through exchange activities and a new communications strategy. Even though these efforts sound many, they only encompass about 20% of the NGDO's programme.

In light of the mounting concerns over food aid, the CFGB has taken *baby steps* in different directions regarding their development strategy. However, by maintaining a strong commitment to the provision of food aid it continues to face a social, economic, and political climate that has given rise to questions over market distortions, local procurement of food and the spread of genetically modified organisms in food aid. From concerns over the legitimacy of food aid as a tool to eliminate hunger, to the extreme that food aid facilitates hunger, this form of NGDO programme continues to be a topic of discussion in Canada and worldwide.

Why has the CFGB resisted changing its development strategy? How can the recent shift to incorporate different types of capacity-building activities be understood? Where does the influence or resistance to change come from? The notion that the work of CFGB is to the detriment, not benefit, of its intended beneficiaries is a disputed and emotional issue, and not one to be undertaken in this study. Furthermore, the question of whether food aid

is *right* or *wrong* is not a focus in the study. There are many different perspectives on hunger and the appropriate responses to it. Rather, the purpose of the research is to explore the ambiguous position of this NGDO through identifying the many different and paradoxical interests within its organisational field that influence and guide its programming strategies. In doing this, the intention is to shed light on the socio-political context of the Canadian international aid system, which can assist in interpreting the actions of morally committed and conscientious NGDOs working in an area as crucial area as the alleviation of global hunger. As a result, the primary research question is:

What explanatory narrative can be developed to convey the changing context of hunger alleviation programming at the CFGB, in response to, or in interaction with, the practices and policies of the Canadian international aid system?

1.3 A Review of “NGDOism”

This section offers a comprehensive presentation of the conception of NGDOs and some of the contemporary challenges they encounter. It begins with the emergence and definition of NGDO and continues by highlighting some of their current social, political and economic influences. The section finishes by presenting a recent framework for reconceptualising NGDOs and their role in development.

Defining NGDOs

From their inception in 1945, NGDOs have increasingly become subjects within the study of international development. There is great variety among NGDOs and thus unpacking the term can be quite convoluted. The field is comprised of a variety of actors from religious to secular, public to private, from small-scale grassroots organisations in low-income countries to large-scale global organisations. NGDOs, placing themselves within the third sector, are distinct from other public and private bodies such that their goals are realized largely through structures related to voluntarism and philanthropy.

Terminology surrounding NGDOs is another area that has undergone many shifts. Kerstin Martens (2000) argues that today the term NGDO must be understood from both the judicial and sociological approaches. Her synopsis suggests that the main distinguishing feature of NGDOs is their recognition by the UN and national governments. Martens' definition recognizes that "*NGOs are formal (professionalized) independent societal organisations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or international level*".¹⁴ Tvedt complements this definition in that "*..all organisations within the aid channel that are institutionally and formally separated from the state apparatus and that do not distribute profit*".¹⁵ Furthermore, Fowler introduced the term "NGDO" to underline the "development" aspect of international non-profit organisations involved in the aid system.¹⁶ While the categorization of NGDOs is not central to this research, henceforth this study recognizes these organisations according to the definitions of both Martens and Tvedt, and makes use of the acronym by Fowler that includes "D"evelopment.¹⁷

In addition to the diversity of the field and definitions, there are also diversity in understanding their roles and theoretical underpinnings. Since the 1980s, studies in the field of NGDOs have broadened considerably. NGDOs are being studied from a multitude of disciplines and levels of analysis, to uncover the complex dynamics surrounding this significant actor in international development. The majority of literature has focused on NGDO effectiveness¹⁸, accountability and performance¹⁹ and partnership²⁰, in addition to the more recent spotlight on the notion of values and identity in NGDOs.²¹

Furthermore, in this period of government devolution, NGDOs have been positioned within what has been termed a "*New Policy Agenda* combining elements of economic liberalism and Western political theory in ways which redefine the role of, and relationships between states, markets and third-sector institutions."²² This plan obliges NGDOs to promote "good governance" while also delivering high quality and low cost social services. Moreover, NGDOs are operating in an increasingly competitive environment, plagued by an inadequate and steadily decreasing resource base.

Forces of Influence among NGDOs

NGDOs are significant actors in the provision of international development assistance. However, they are continually dealing with a variety of pressures, restrictions and relationships that affect them both internally and externally. The consequence of such conditions is changes within the structure and practices of a NDGO.

Understanding why some NGDOs change while others remain in a more static state is an interesting and complex question in international development studies. Much of the literature on NGDOs and organisational change has been located within a resource dependency perspective.²³ According to Fowler, exchanges between a NGDO and its external environment are determined by its dependency on the resources offered by the environment.²⁴ Most NGDOs are highly dependent on a few external funding sources, which tend to have significant influence over them and making them vulnerable to compromise.

Funding restraints on NGDOs are the result of the turbulent environment in which they operate. Consistently, NGDOs have been highly dependent on public funds, however as governments have increasingly been constrained by the demands of globalisation, for instance due to the international competition over resources, highly industrialised nations have been steadily decreasing their official aid commitments.

At the same time, public policies play a significant role in the ability of a NGDO to carry out its mission. There is a growing proportion of aid reallocated for disasters, and many governments still require that national NGDOs facilitate the funding processes of NGDOs from less industrialised nations. This means that for NGDOs from highly industrialised nations, the bureaucratic threshold to access resources is becoming more ambiguous.²⁵

Furthermore, NGDOs may be provided with support for a programme and then policy changes occur across the sector and the programme is no longer recognized. Different government's and bureaucracy's have their own distinct international priorities, such as geographical regions, target groups and forms of development aid. For example in 2002,

the British government claimed that it wanted to 'democratise' the national lottery, to give local people a greater say in where the money is spent.²⁶ Reports speculated that the government's true motives were to weaken organisations involved in causes that were potential vote-losers, by eliminating their backing. It was believed that by allowing the public to vote, grants that normally would go to organisations that supported international causes like refugees and asylum seekers would be redirected to national campaigns. This example is meant to illustrate the insecure relations that can exist between Government and NGDOs. The amount of funding received by a NGDO, as well as the nature of their relationship can be affected according to changes in government interests and policy.

The potential for expansion or retrenchment through public funding lies in the hands of the ruling political party. NGDOs receive financial support in the form of agreements, grants and donations from governments. In 2004, the aid agency of the US government, and the world's most profuse food aid donor, threatened "to tear up their contracts and find new partners" if NGDOs were not willing to conform to American foreign policy.²⁷ To limit the insecurity brought on by the uncertain nature of public funding, NGDOs remain in a constant state of reinvention in order to reduce any organisational weaknesses and to make improvements.²⁸

Engaging with the corporate sector or is another way NGDOs are gaining much needed resources, however it too comes with consequences. The fundamental driving forces of these sectors are unrelated to the missions of NGDOs, though many NGDOs are deciding to involve themselves with private companies and banks to generate additional funds. NGDOs receiving capital from corporations or IFIs attempt to organise themselves in a position where the funds received do not dictate the agenda. There is the risk that linking with particular sponsors and relying on their donations will jeopardize the organisational goals of NGDOs or present dilemmas otherwise absent. To illustrate this, a British cancer research NGDO rejected a £1m donation from Nestlé, over concerns about the company's motives.²⁹ Nestlé has long been associated with jeopardising the lives of mothers and infants by pushing powdered baby milk sales in low-income countries, and allegedly failing to abide by international codes. The NGDO feared that Nestlé wanted to use its positive image to improve its own reputation, and therefore declined the donation.

Although new forms of economic resources may be greatly needed, pursuing new capital has the potential to result in undermining NGDO legitimacy.

Another area affecting NGDOs today is the constant changes to government policies that have translated into an NGDO sector characterised by increasing competition over essential resources and a lack of self-sufficiency within organisations.³⁰ NGDOs must compete for resources, such as public and private donations and government contracts. To illustrate this in 2002, when two of the largest “United Way” organisations in the U.S. (these are NGDOs that support community-based initiatives) published false annual reports. In the race to attract funding, these NGDOs attempted to appear more competitive and efficient with donor resources by inflating their contributions and minimizing expenses.³¹

Subsequently, a main sector-wide goal has been to reduce the dependence on government aid by diversifying and increasing domestic funding sources.³² One way to achieve this has been to engage more with the private sector to secure additional funding.³³ An alternative tactic has been the increase in relations with another valuable source of funding - the public. NGDOs that manage to be considered as legitimate development actors are increasingly being rewarded with support expressed in terms of public and private sponsorships.

The tumultuous nature of a NGDOs environment has the potential to create fundamental dilemmas for the organisations. In the struggle to attract scarce donor resources, they are subject to chasing programmes and policies in concert with donor priorities, while at the same time trying to maintain their own mission for social justice. It has been suggested that NGDOs are in a constant state of reinventing themselves and their programmes to accommodate for the shifting political and economic priorities of donors while trying to manage the needs of recipients.³⁴

Today, NGDOs are dependent actors in a changing global environment. They are modest economic players, though they have the ability to impact policies and politics to develop and improve exchanges with marginalised regions. This convoluted relationship is the

result of the pressures that arise from their environment, where NGOs are left to adjust to external influences in order to ensure their survival.

Reconceptualising the Role of NGOs

As has been presented, NGOs have been a primary instrument in the promotion of development. However since the 1990s, growing criticisms concerning their contributions to international development have been prevalent.³⁵ For almost twenty years, the issue of NGOs as an effective instrument in promoting development has largely been questioned, not only by the state and the public, but also by many of the organisations themselves.³⁶ Literature warning of the co-option of NGOs into the neoliberal agendas of donors has surfaced.³⁷ Implications that NGOs lack legitimacy and accountability towards the beneficiaries of their programmes have also been acknowledged.³⁸

The structural predicament in which NGOs find themselves was highlighted in a recent book on food relief to North Korea.³⁹ By revealing the relationships between the three key actors - the donor, the NGO and the recipient, Micheal Scholms illustrates the separate set of obligations and constraints of each of the actors, and the conflicts that arise as a consequence of the different objectives. In the case of North Korea, the ambiguous role of NGOs was characterized by its disparate partnerships that ultimately undermined its developmental priorities.

It has been argued that the primary function of an NGO is to improve the social and economic livelihoods of persons located in less industrialised countries. It has been said that they emerged as suppliers of social welfare services in these states, thus enabling continued development across sectors. Besides the aforementioned support, the role of NGOs evolved further to include advocacy and public policy making. The claim is that NGOs have distinct competences in promoting areas such as: political participation and democracy; environmental sustainability; gender equality; education; nutrition; infrastructure development; and agriculture.

However, Terje Tvedt has offered a compelling review of the development of NGOs

globally, and suggests that there has been a misinterpretation within the NGDO research tradition.⁴⁰ In this, Tvedt points to the theories on the growth of the sector as a process of functional necessity, and argues that, in fact, many governments were disbursing funds to NGDOs to carry out the work they were not interested in doing. Tvedt goes beyond this by identifying that the perception of NGDOs as actors that are independent from the state has been useful in providing legitimacy to the international aid system.⁴¹

Another feature of Tvedt's arguments is the usefulness of the term "international aid system" over the more common classification of "aid industry".⁴² By regarding it as a "system" this allows for a more complex understanding of the relations between the entirety of its actors and their actions from the inside, such as the competing value agenda's in the field of development aid and traditional foreign policy.⁴³ However, it also lends itself to examining the influences from outside the system and furthermore the ways in which other parts of society are influenced by these interactions.⁴⁴

Tvedt has put forth that the concern over advancing the work of NGDOs has resulted in a failure to recognize a vital self-reflexive process within the sector. Accordingly, he suggests the need for conducting research that focuses on understanding the relations, networks and alliances between donor states, NGDOs and other relevant actors. He has coined the term the "DOSTANGO-system" (DONor STAtE, NGOs), as an analytical framework to understand relational issues of NGDOs in international development. The Dostango-system is defined as an empirical field consisting of certain patterns of relationship or linkages between, for example, actors in civil society, donor states and development NGDOs.⁴⁵ The concept offers a specific analytical understanding of the institutional context in which Northern-based NGDOs and their networks relate,

*"The Dostango concept focuses on one very important aspect of the international aid system, as it may encourage contextualized research on how these specific relationships have developed internationally as well as on the particular types of linkages that can be found in each country between this system and other parts of civil society and the state apparatus."*⁴⁶

The main features of the system are the distinct rhetoric or “buzzwords” employed within it, the transfer of resources in the system and the shifting conceptual relations among the actors involved in development aid.⁴⁷ In particular, it is the recognition of the “donor-line” or the power of the donor, to directly or indirectly influence the operations and priorities of NGDOs is a key feature that relates to this study.

Tvedt implies that there exists a variety of distinct cases worldwide and suggests the usefulness of historical analyses of the interactions between NGDOs and their networks in different countries to reveal the systemic aspects in which they are being embedded.⁴⁸ Additionally he suggests that national forms of the Dostango-system are simultaneously rooted in domestic politics, as well as the international system.⁴⁹ This research offers a perspective on this macro-level phenomenon through a depiction of an interaction at a micro-level. More specifically, the Dostango-system in Canada will be revealed through the perspective of a single NGDO involved a critical form international development aid.

Although the field is opening up to more qualitative and dynamic thinking on NGDOs, mainstream theory tends to leave us with a fairly linear understanding of NGDOs’ behaviour as a circumstance of their resource dependent relationships. It can be argued that much of the NGDO literature provides little insight into how specific social institutions (ex. education or religious perspectives) restricts and increases changes processes in NGDOs, and how the phenomenon unfolds in various situations, over the course of time.

Tvedt offers an interesting argument for adopting a systems perspective in relation to NGDOs.⁵⁰ He highlights tendency to study NGDOs as a homogenous group rather than placing focus on their unique experiences. He argues that NGDOs have commonly been considered as a homogeneous group of organisations as a consequence of their political and normative foundations.⁵¹ This standardisation in classifying NGDOs has led to challenges in studying particular forms of NGDOs and their linkages to the rest of the system because, in fact, their distinctions are many, for example this phenomenon is especially present involves religious- based versus secular-based NGDOs. Subsequently, Tvedt proposes that the system perspective provides space for more organisational

heterogeneity, since the criteria is based on formal-structural features.⁵²

The intention of this study is not to examine definitional issues, such as whether Canadian civil society corresponds with the Western conceptions of civil society, or to identify changes at the sector-wide level. Rather, it centres on examining the relationship between a NGOs and the variety of actors that play a role in influencing it. This study takes an in-depth focus on a single NGO, because a NGOs network and alliances are highly complex and multi-faceted, to get one ‘story’ or meaningful glimpse of the context in which Northern NGOs function.

The intention of this introduction has been to portray some of the main environmental challenges affecting NGOs, to better understand NGO behaviour. From here, an examination of the forces that influence an NGO can commence. The next section provides the backdrop to the case of the CFGB and the struggles NGOs face in relation to a variety of environmental or systemic influences. The story starts by establishing the context of NGOs working in hunger alleviation. It begins with a brief overview of the problem of global hunger and the international response to it. This is followed by an introduction and historical presentation of the Canadian context in relation to fighting global hunger. The section finishes with the introduction of the subject of the dissertation, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the foremost Canadian NGO in the provision of food aid.

1.4 The Research Design

The purpose of this research is not to make universal generalizations, rather, it is to illustrate, in the most appropriate way, how and why a NGO changes in relation to its institutional environment. Furthermore, to portray the dilemmas and challenges involved in organisational change by looking, in microscopic detail, at a NGO involved in the fundamental global catastrophe of hunger.

The aim is to gain a micro-level understanding of the process of change in a NGO

involved in a vital form of development assistance. It is a scholarly engagement where fresh insight is sought on organisational adaptation, conformity, change or resistance through the stories the actors express. The intention is not to undertake action-oriented research, rather my intention was to remain on the “outside” and not attempt to change their practices through individual involvement. This is largely the result of the initiative for the research coming from myself, rather than the CFGB inviting me to assist them in developing their activities. However, in the later stages of the research I did engage in many interesting discussions and offered my observations to members of the NGDO as well as others in the field. The informants in the study are encouraged to read the analysis on the impact of the environment on the change process of a NGDO and make whatever use of it they can. The goal *is* to provide a “story” on organisational change in one NGDO so that those interested can become more aware of the complexity of the issue.

What can emerge from such a micro-level study is an insight for a framework design useful to generate conceptualisation that can direct and inspire further investigation, research and knowledge. The particular and micro-level and focused study hopefully can provide heuristics, critical insights and resources to undertake further work and contribution to the salient topic of organisational change in NGDOs. The improved understanding of the change process at the CFGB should inform ongoing developments at the organisation and draw attention to the variety of issues the management can devote more attention to in dealing with the challenges of hunger alleviation. At the sector level, enhanced understanding on organisational change can facilitate the development of a more constructive process for other NGDOs. Finally, the research hopes to provide a useful framework for understanding how a NGDO may respond to and/or deal with an increasingly unstable international aid system.

Fight against Hunger through a Narrative Approach

Storytelling is the point in time where facts and feeling meet. It is how we explain, how we make sense of social reality and how we share knowledge. The traditional perception of a “narrative” is that it has a clear beginning, a chronological progress, a plot and an

ending.⁵² The plot is the principle that drives the narrative, and it gathers the events of the story into a coherent whole.⁵³ Epistemologically, narrative knowledge is reliant upon social interactions between the researcher and the organisational participants. Social researchers construct knowledge through their interaction with relevant individuals for the purpose of revealing social reality through their own stories, or according to the ideas that present themselves through the stories.

In the understanding of organisations and their process of managing, it has become increasingly commonplace to discover knowledge from a narrative approach.⁵⁴ Narrative knowledge is ever-present in the daily efforts of organizing. Looking from the outside, each organisation has its own unique evolutionary path and structural form. Alternatively, the uniqueness from within an organisation is the means by which individuals assign meanings to particular experiences and events in and around it.⁵⁵

“Of all the ways we communicate with one another, the story has established itself as the most comfortable the most versatile – and perhaps also the most dangerous. Stories touch all of us, reaching across cultures and generations, accompanying humanity down the centuries.”

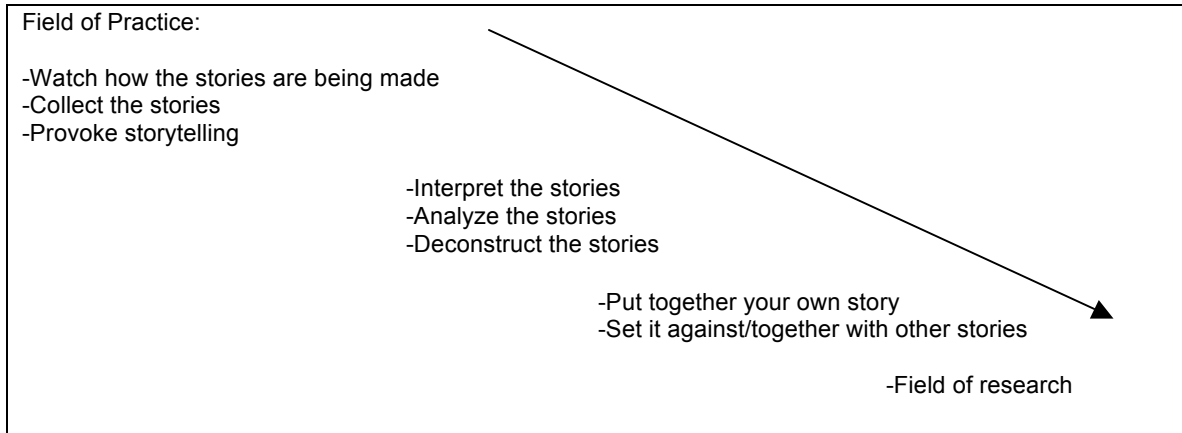
Robert Fulford⁵⁶

When we endeavour to interpret a process that is unfolding in an organisation, the “rich tapestry of organisational realities” is described through stories within and around the organisation.⁵⁶ Researchers on organisations watch organisational narratives unfold, and then search for patterns and regularities and finally constructs a narrative themselves.⁵⁷

The following figure is an illustration of the various uses of the narrative in social science.

⁵² Though it is outside of the context of this research, it should be noted that a key debate within narrative research is whether to make use of the notion of “narratives” or “stories” and whether these notions are independent of one another (Boje 2001; Czarniawska 2004). For the purpose of this study, Czarniawska’s version of the “narrative” has been adopted.

Figure 1. The Uses of Narrative in Social Science Research



(adapted fr. Czarniawska 2000)

Furthermore, it must be recognised that there is always more to the story and that there is no single story.⁵⁸ A social researcher can always further develop the story with additional interviews or theoretical perspectives, and subsequently end up with a completely new story. Along the same lines, a critique associated with the narrative approach is the “political act of totalizing” someone else’s story.⁵⁹ Czarniawska argues that researchers can avoid this critique by: taking the authorial responsibility for the narrative and allowing room for opposition from the informants themselves; and by including as many “voices of the field” as possible. Using a narrative approach implies that the researcher understands reality as a social construction, where there exists many different understandings of the same story, and that stories are continually transforming.

In this study, knowledge construction is premised on the stories of relevant organisational actors involved in hunger alleviation. Through narrating their own experiences in relation to the fight against global hunger, the reader has a window into the processes involved in this form of international development programme, from the “stories” of the organisational participants themselves. These stories reflect the participant’s reality - the reality on which future hunger alleviation actions will be based.

A significant principle in the study is that knowledge construction takes its departure in the stories of key persons involved in hunger alleviation. Thus, what is captured is the

manner in which the organisational participants themselves depict the process, which means, the reader comes to understand the approach to fighting hunger from the experiences from actors in the field. These stories reflect the reality involved in the struggle to alleviate hunger, and which future international development aid initiatives are likely to be based.

Story-telling has long been recognised as a means by which individuals find meaning in organisations and organisational life.⁶⁰ A critical self-reflective approach is particularly essential in taking a narrative approach to the study of NGOs struggling to fight hunger through various and divergent approaches. This situation can provide the researcher with an increasingly important and personally challenging role in the knowledge construction process. Without reflexively considering the researchers own role in collecting stories, there is a danger of manipulating the phenomenon under study, and therefore must constantly be considering what she takes for granted.

The Case Study

The case study is presented in the form of a story, as I experienced it. The study centres on the relations between a NGO attempting to preserve its core values and practices on hunger alleviation, in a changing environment. In the absence of knowledge on the organisational change process at the CFGB, it calls for an explorative and empirically grounded research process. The dissertation is empirically grounded in data that originates from a number of stories from the various actors within the NGO, and a collection of additional narratives from the organisational field. In regards to the concept of “stories”, organisational actors and participants from the field share their experiences, organisational and otherwise, “narratives are thus regarded as the means through which experience is reflexively reconstituted, made meaningful and made communicable”.⁶¹ These stories are recent as well as retrospective tales of the change process and the organisational reactions that developed.

When adopting an approach to examine how an organisation changes or stays the same, it is helpful to have a set of approaches that assist in interpreting an organisation’s actions. Danish social scientist, Bent Flyvberg, argues that case study research is the process by

which one uses basic knowledge in an exercise of connectivity and operationalisation; the researcher becomes a practitioner not only in their own fields of knowledge but also through experiential methods, using practical applicability as a “prerequisite for advanced understanding”.⁶² A case study design provides the researcher with an uncontrolled and unpredictable environment to observe a broad range of social phenomena including descriptions of routine events that may otherwise be overlooked. Case studies lend themselves to the exploration of present-day phenomena within its real-life context, and are especially appropriate when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear.⁶³

Selecting cases can be a difficult process. The selection of a Canadian NGDO was based on the fact that it is mostly North American NGDOs that are engaged in providing food aid as a means to fighting hunger. Furthermore, the paucity of available academic material on NGDOs in Canada, especially those in the area of hunger also made it relevant. Initially, I thought the study would include a sample with a variety of NGDOs but in the course of the research decided it would be more beneficial to hone in on one organisation. Furthermore, organisational change is linked to the organisational field and therefore it would be extremely difficult to look at many organisations and their many organisational fields. The CFGB was not in itself pre-selected, it set itself apart, as it is the sole Canadian NGDO with the primary practice of providing food aid as the way to end hunger. Thus, the research became a single case study of the CFGB.

Robert Yin, another prominent theorist in case study research, explains that cases that are singular in nature are used for various reasons; when the case is unique, or serves to reveal a phenomenon previously not observed.⁶⁴ However, research that focuses on a single case study has often been criticized for its incapacity to transmit results for widespread generalization due to contextual differences, structural vagueness and a deficiency in precision regarding procedures.⁶⁵ Often the degree, to which a study’s finding can be theoretically generalized in the broader sphere, is the condition for which it is considered valid.⁶⁶ However, this study concurs with Flyvbjerg’s perspective, that the human learning process is restrained by a focus on the generalization of knowledge, deriving concepts and understandings from non-contextual applications.⁶⁷ It can be

argued that a single case study provides a more stable foundation for conceptual understanding and that parts of the research findings may be relevant for other cases.⁶⁸ Though the context includes circumstances that are representative of some of the difficulties that surround the NGDO sector in Canada and in other highly industrialised countries that the CFGB is not a typical case and thus its comparative testability is not practical. Thus, analytical generalizability in the case is not what is essential; rather extracting methodological generalisation is a worthy endeavour.

Defining the type of case is a confusing element in case study researches because of the variety of contributors that often provide overlapping terms for cases. However, this study can be defined in two ways. First, it can be termed an exploratory case study, as a preliminary framework for the study was developed ahead of time and the fieldwork was carried out prior to defining the research questions.⁶⁹ Secondly, the particular approach to this study was in the form of a processual case approach, which is oriented towards developments that take place over time. Andrew Pettigrew's leading article on processual research, defines a processual approach in organisational settings as "a sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time in context".⁷⁰ In this approach, the researcher is effectively positioned to not only confirm or falsify theoretical dispositions, but more decisively, to discover the interrelations between concepts and theory. Therefore, a processual case study method in combination with a narrative approach to collecting data is employed to examine how organisational change at the CFGB has been resisted over a period of time. The investigation relates to developments in the practice of providing food aid, which began in 1983 and continues today.

This study was approached from an understanding of the complex nature of organisational change and the need to maintain a broad perspective when examining the environment of an organisation, thus approaching it from the perspective of the single case was considered to be the most meaningful and practical method. The case of the CFGB is employed to illustrate a microcosm of organisational change and to draw new and detailed insights of a single NGDO. Developments in the CFGBs practices will be examined in relation to external and internal pressures for change. In particular,

transformations in the practices of the NGDO sector, as well as those that have taken place in government policy are underlined. Furthermore, a wide-ranging perspective was taken in terms of what is involved in the traditions and practices of Canadian NGDOs.

The NDGO sector forms a key part of the understanding of organisational change at the CFGB. Initially the sample was to be restricted to what David Sogge calls “private aid agencies”⁷¹. This grouping of agencies is differentiated, as they are considerably smaller in size compared to large-scale, globe-spanning development organisations such as CARE or OXFAM. Private aid agencies, because of their limited size, have closer and more direct access to their resource-base, and thereby introduce a distinct power dimension. It implies that these agencies are better able to pursue their own development agenda, allowing for more autonomy in relation to other organisations that are bound, for example to a global mandate. Thus, for the sake of argument it was the intention to deal specifically with this subset in the NGDO sector. However, during the fieldwork period I had the opportunity to encounter and discuss with staff from global NGDOs and multilateral agencies. This opportunity added more depth and insight into the case study and therefore played a part in the explanation of organisational change of the CFGB.

Generating Data in the Case

Methodology serves as a device to discover empirical regularities and possible explanations in a case. An attempt will be made to find possible explanations to the emerging processes of change at the CFGB with the expansion of empirical knowledge. An essential method to investigate any organisation is collecting empirical data at the operational level. It is important to discover how the structure of the NGDO, its functions, challenges and opportunities in the past, may be employed to interpret its present.

Process-oriented research allows for the examination of events as they unfold in an organisation, though general trends may be discovered throughout the case, the main purpose is rather to provide explanations of the development that transpire in an organisation.⁷² Processes are explained both through the actions of individuals or collective agency. While the core of processual analysis is the idea of agency; the role of

context is also fundamental. Process-oriented research is the implicit recognition that change occurs at the intersection between agency and contexts.⁷³

The process of organisational change in the CFGB is shaped by the many events that unfold within the organisational field. A process-oriented strategy is, in this way, useful as it questions many presupposed notions,

“..a major benefit of this strategy is that it enables the development of processual theories which are able to unmask some of the common myths about organisational change such as: the linearity myth that change goes through a logical sequence of stages; the improvement myth that change is marked by a line of continual improvement; and the leadership myth that there is one leader of large-scale change rather than a number of leaders with a range of roles which may emerge, evolve and decline at different times during the process of change.”⁷⁴

A processual approach allows for a vigorous analysis of the organisational field.

Processes serve to explain the contexts in which they are embedded.⁷⁵ In order to accurately present the process of organisational change at the CFGB, an embedded approach is used to relate many of the relevant features of its social environment. An embedded approach in a case study design involves two or more factors under consideration.⁷⁶ This study argues that it is essential to address more than the influence of funding constraints in the process of organisational, as it change would eliminate many of the contributory features pertinent to the overall discussion. According to institutional theory, an organisation’s environment plays a vital role in an organisation’s change process, and as a consequence the key external actors involved in the managing a NGDO or contributing to its operations, are implicated in the analysis.

The CFGB is the primary actor under analysis, however the other key actors are found within the organisational field, they include: CIDA as the main funding body; the most active CFGB member churches and their field offices overseas; Canadian NGDOs

involved in hunger alleviation as identified by their affiliation to a network of NGDO concerned with food security, the Food Security Policy Group; the agribusiness companies that provide donations of agricultural inputs; farmers and citizens that donate time and money; and the supplementary data gathered from Canadian academics and activists involved in hunger alleviation.

A potential weakness when using an embedded research design is due to the extensive concentration of the many factors at hand. The researcher risks losing sight or inappropriately analyzing and concluding on each source separately, thereby ending up with a comparison of the separate conclusions that were discovered.⁷⁷ Consequently, this was a constant consideration throughout the study.

Pettigrew has outlined three main elements for conducting process-oriented research – the longitudinal element, the collection of knowledge and the validity of the research.⁷⁸ Process-oriented research is founded on a longitudinal element, which means that organisational change is interpreted as a process that takes place over a specified period of time. As previously mentioned, the investigation centres on explaining organisational change at the CFGB, as a journey through time, from its establishment in 1983 until 2005. It will be shown that from its establishment, the CFGB has been acting outside of the socially determined practices of the NGDO sector in terms of its continued priority towards food aid.

The next feature of processual research is the notion that, in order for a researcher to collect the crucial knowledge needed for analyzing a case, they must be “hands-on” during the fieldwork.⁷⁹ This enables the researcher to develop the tacit skills to ask suitable and well-timed questions, develop good relations and stay receptive to new and competing information. Fieldwork requires skills that are flexible enough to conform to the non-routinized method of data collection, the continuous interaction between data and theory, and the ability to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.

This understanding of case research is buttressed by Erik Maaløe's approach to case studies and also complements the use of a narrative approach to collecting data. In his 'Explorative Integration' method, he recognizes case study research as,

..a cyclic approach of a continuous dialogue between pre-chosen theories, generated data, our interpretation, feedback from our informants, which hopefully will lead us to a more inclusive theory building or even understanding.

Knowledge construction is therefore linked to the essence of the study in light of an ongoing process, whereby a collection of empirical narrative knowledge is continually presenting itself, becoming organized, interpreted, constructed etc. This is occurring in conjunction with further theorizing as a result of the emerging theoretical frameworks, to move towards a holistic meaning in the study.

Indeed, a higher degree of intuitive ability and exploratory interest is required to effectively employ this method during fieldwork. It is useful in providing guidelines in both the collection of empirical data, and in analyzing key periods and issues raised. Furthermore, this method reflects the process of determining the appropriate theories to employ in the study.

Role of Theory

The study aspires to carry out in-depth research to practically investigate the relevance of the applied theories in the case. Theory is applied to facilitate interpreting the specifics of the research but also to assist in forming a general understanding of the themes involved in organisational change at the CFGB. It is not my intention to elaborate on new theoretical grounds but to maximize the usage of the existing theoretical frameworks on organisational change to explain the changing structures and practices in the case.

The selection of theories is based both on their role in helping to understand the case, as well as their ability to establish a framework for exploring and interpreting the empirical data. To understand how a NGDO's behaviour can be influenced to resist change, certain analytical tools from Resource Dependency Theory and Institutional Theory can be

employed. Both theories originate within sociology and they view changes in an organisation as the outcome of its interaction with its environment. However, they approach organisational change from different yet complementary perspectives, where one is based on the notion of adaptation and the other on conformity.

The Resource Dependency Theory first emerged with the seminal work of Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik. It explores how external constraints affect organisations and the ways to manage organisations in order to ease these constraints.⁸⁰ In this framework, organisational change is based on adaptation and is also one of the most common ways of interpreting change among NGOs. They argue that the main task of the management is to adapt in order to secure essential resources and strive to maximise self-sufficiency, in light of environmental demands.⁸¹ In this perspective, organisations have a high degree of active agency.

On the other hand, Institutional Theory moves beyond this understanding in demonstrating that organisations are technically but also socially and culturally dependent on their environment.⁸² In general, Institutional Theory is based on the various institutional influences that affect an organisations environment. The forefather of Institutional Theory, Philip Selznick, has proposed that personnel in an organisation can have a divided set of objectives, thus it is hard for them and the organisation to have the same inherent, rational objectives.⁸³ A more contemporary view of organisational change within institutionalism came from the influential works of both Meyer and Rowan⁸⁴ and DiMaggio and Powell.⁸⁵ They propose that changes in an organisations structure occurs over time and due to “isomorphism” a process of becoming more similar in structure by incorporating institutional rules within their own structures. DiMaggio and Powell’s major contribution on isomorphism also includes a definition of the organisational field as the key level of analysis. Finally, Greenwood and Hinings original work offers the perspective on organisational change based on the way an organisation adopts, maintains and abandons patterns of structuring in light of the institutional pressures in the organisational field.⁸⁶

Christine Oliver, another institutional theorist, has suggested that this wide-ranging emphasis on conforming to institutional pressures has minimized the role of active agency and resistance in an organisation's relations with its institutional environment.⁸⁷ She integrates notions from Resource Dependency Theory into her work and proposes that management of organisations make strategic choices in response to the institutional pressures of the environment.⁸⁸ Consequently, Oliver offers an array of strategic responses organisations use to cope with institutional pressures and argues that organisations may react in a variety of ways from passive compliance to active defiance of an institutional environment.

Although the nature of organisational change varies according to each perspective, change is recognised as an effect of an organisations interaction with its environment. However, taken separately, neither the prevailing view of managers in an adaptation approach, nor the conformity thesis would serve to sufficiently explain organisational change at the CFGB. Thus, the study seeks to combine both Resource Dependency Theory and Institutional Theory as a method to explain the process of change within the CFGB. An integrated framework can be useful for exploring the various sources of institutional pressure on the CFGB and the strategic responses the organisation employed to deal with them.

The intention is that this framework will assist in revealing the pressures between the institutional environment and actors within the organisational field, which influence the formal and informal underpinnings of the CFGB. The theoretical framework will also assist in distinguishing and interpreting the challenging position of this NGDO, their programming priorities and change. Furthermore, this study seeks to identify whether there are benefits in combining these two approaches. This does not mean that another story could not have been told by using different theories, but that these theories provide one avenue for understanding the issue of organisational change and resistance.

1.5 Structure of the Report

The case study is divided into 9 chapters.

Chapter 1 has been an introduction to the dissertation. Within this chapter the problem area, the aim of the study, and the method in which the study was carried out were each presented. It began by introducing the focal organisation - the CFGB and the contentious issues surrounding its main practice of providing food aid. The behaviour of the CFGB in relation to its organisational field was the issue that led to the research questions. The chapter continued by reviewing the NGDO literature and by presenting the many constraints affecting NGDO today. First and foremost, this section was meant to provide insight into the institutional environment of the NGDO sector that deals in international development aid. The final part of the section presented the considerations over the research design and case study.

Chapter 2 is the presentation of the theoretical framework employed in the study. The purpose of this chapter is to develop an analytical frame to investigate the changes that have and have not taken place at the CFGB's, in light of the changing institutional environment. Two theories of organisational change are introduced to the extent that they can provide a practical set of theoretical guidelines to clarify and interrogate the case study.

The first half of chapter 3 provides a picture of the global environment of fighting hunger: a history of the struggle against hunger, from an understanding of its causes, through its evolution, to its current interpretation. Past and present perspectives on hunger convey the context from which NGDOs base their current development practices. It also serves as an introduction to the key actors involved in responding to hunger, with the primary focus on the role of NGDOs. The second half of the chapter describes the contemporary international framework on Food Security.

Chapter 4 describes the research design. This section depicts the considerations and decisions made prior to the collection of the data, for instance the use of a qualitative

method and the process of checking the reliability and validity of the material. More specifically it discusses conducting case research, the sources of evidence, the limitations during the data collection process and the analytical tools used in the case.

Chapter 5 presents a portrait of the Canadian non-governmental development organisation under study - the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The section begins by describing the sector of NDGOs involved in hunger alleviation in order to shed light on the CFGBs structure and responses to hunger in relation to the rest of the sector. This is followed by a portrait of the CFGB: its mission, management, procedures, sources of funding, operations, etc. By examining the organisational structure of the NGDO, the key forces influencing the resource and normative bases of the CFGB will come to light.

Chapters 6 through 9 depict the variety of influences that arise from the primary funding bodies to the CFGB. Chapter 6 begins by characterising the CFGB's member church agencies and their constituents, as well as the CFGB's grassroots partner organisations.

The intention of these chapters is to identify and illustrate the relationship between the various political, economic and social forces shaping the CFGB in its endeavour to provide international development aid. The chapters centre on the resource relations between these actors, and also attempt to portray the variety of distinct and underlying perceptions of each actor concerning the battle against hunger. Chapter 7 identifies the role and influence of the Members, their fieldworkers and the constituents. The intention is to demonstrate the extent of the Member representation and influence on the guiding principles, programmes and policies of the CFGB.

Chapter 7 introduces another key actor with fiscal ties to the CFGB - the Agribusiness industry. A holistic understanding of the involvement of Canadian Agribusiness in food aid is described through a presentation of the state of the industry globally, as well as the issues surrounding the industry's utmost contribution – biotechnology. This is proceeded by a description of Agribusiness in the Canadian context and the more specifically the details on agreement between Canadian Agribusiness and the CFGB.

Chapter 8 is an examination of the final key donor – the Government of Canada. To fully appreciate the role of the GoC in shaping the organisational structure of the CFGB, an understanding of Canada’s international and the national commitments are necessary. Thus, the chapter introduces these phenomena by presenting Canada’s role in the battle against hunger globally, followed by its history of development assistance.

Chapter 9 is presents the key inter-connecting and overlapping themes that emerged in order to provide a narrative on organisational change at the CFGB. Finally, chapter 10 concludes on the main contribution of the case study. This section evaluates the conclusions from the empirical chapters and finishes with my own reflections on the fieldwork practice and my role as a researcher.

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CHAPTER 2 – A Theoretical Frame for Organisational Change

2. Introduction to Change in Organisational Theory

The aim of this chapter is to present a comprehensive description of organisational change. Perspectives on organisational change can be found in many disciplines, such as political science, economics, management and sociology, and each vary considerably. For the purpose of this study, Resource Dependency and Institutional Theory were selected as they each approach organisational change from different yet complementary perspectives. These two theories have been combined in numerous studies as they view change as the outcome of an organisations interaction with its environment. However one is based on the notion of adaptation and the other on conformity.

In brief, the notion of organisational change due to adaptation comes from Resource Dependency Theory, which argues that an organisation will adapt its objectives or practices, as the result of the recurrent interaction with its environment. In this school of thought, the interaction between an organisation and its environment is determined by the strategic choices or decisions made by organisational managers to adapt or not, to the external environment. In contrast, Institutional Theory considers that organisational change is a result of conforming to similar structures within the field that are based on socially accepted values, practices and taken for granted myths.

Although the nature of organisational change varies according to each theory, change is recognised as an effect of an organisations interaction with its environment. However, taken separately, neither the prevailing view of managers in an adaptation approach, nor the conformity thesis would serve to sufficiently explain organisational change at the CFGB. Thus, the research argues that combining both Resource Dependency and Institutional Theory is the method in which to explain change within a NGDO. This research is based on the argument that organisational change can be interpreted both as a result of the interaction between institutional pressures from the environment and the

adaptive capabilities of a NGOs' management. For that reason, an integrated approach will provide the most constructive and practical framework for interpretation. To provide additional clarity, the following is a summation of the key similarities and differences between the two theories employed in the study.

Figure 2. Comparison of Resource Dependence Theory & Institutional Theory

	Resource Dependence Theory	Institutional Theory
Originating authors:	Jeffrey Pfeffer & Gerald Salancik (1978)	Philip Selznick (1957) Paul DiMaggio & Walter Powell (1983)
Level of analysis:	Organisation	Organisation
Key dependent factors:	Power of one organisation over another	Institutional conformity & change
Key independent factors:	Resource importance Alternatives to the resource	Processes that establish rules, norms & practices

(Adapted from Theories used in IS Research, Hossam Ali-Hassan)⁸⁹

The structure of the chapter is such that the first part is a presentation of Resource Dependency Theory, highlighting the work of Jeremy Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik. The remaining part of the chapter is an introduction to the Institutional Theory of organisations. This section begins with a presentation of the work of the prominent and original contributor to early institutional thinking, Philip Selznick, and is followed by the works by the more contemporary theorists, otherwise known as “New Institutionalists” Meyer & Rowan, and DiMaggio & Powell’s work on isomorphism. Contributions by other writers within both frameworks are also included to supplement the original contributions. Finally, the last section in this chapter and the bridging force between the two theories is the work by Christine Oliver on strategies for resisting change. Overall, this aims to provide a framework for understanding how and why the changes at the CFGB in relation to its environment have taken place.

2.1 Resource Dependency Theory

Organisations as Spheres of Change

In this theory, variations between organisations are explained based on the rational identification and use of scarce resources. This is founded on the notion that organisational survival is dependent on regular access to resources. The underlying presumption of Resource Dependency Theory is that resource selection and accumulation is a product of both internal organisational decision-making and external strategic factors. Internal administrative decisions are driven by considerations based on efficiency and effectiveness, while external influences are features of the industry that impact the organisation.

Organisations need a consistent resource base to carry out their activities, gather information, and hire skilled labour. However, as organisations are rarely self-sufficient, and internal resources are frequently in short supply, organisations will seek external resources. An exchange relationship occurs when an organisation makes an agreement with an actor to accrue needed resources. The foundation of an exchange relationship is based both on resource dependence as well as the requirement to coordinate activities across interests of the various actors involved.

A second assumption of resource dependency is that organisational activities and outcomes can be explained by the context in which the organisation is embedded⁹⁰. Organisations are dependent on resources from the external environment, which makes them interdependent with those in which they contend. The focal organisations behaviour becomes externally influenced due to the fact that it must adhere to the demands of the organisational actors in its environment to draw resources and maintain its survival. The interdependent relationship of an organisation with other organisational actors can result in efforts to influence the autonomy of its organisational activities.

Organisational interdependencies are vital to an organisation's structures and ultimate survival. Pfeffer and Salancik identified two types of interdependencies - behaviour independence and outcome interdependence. When an organisation's activities are dependent upon actions of another organisational actor it is called behaviour interdependence. The interdependent relationship between an NGDO that relies on financial support from the government to carry out operations overseas is an example of

behaviour interdependence. In order for the NGDO to alter its dependence upon government funds, it may form inter-organisational linkages with other NGDOs, such as joint overseas programmes.

Outcome interdependence is where the outcomes accomplished by one social actor are interdependent with those of another. This form of interdependence is characterised by two distinct forms - competitive and symbiotic. Competitive interdependence is when two or more actors are dependent on the same pool of resources such that if one receives resources it omits the other(s) and in severe cases to the point where organisational survival may be threatened. Symbiotic interdependence occurs when the actions of one social actor contributes to actions of another, in order that the mutually beneficial relationship must be upheld for both actors to continue their operations. An example of this form of interdependence is established when Northern NGDOs partner with Southern NGDOs and rely on each other for monitoring and reporting activities to funding bodies.

Power is a central theme of Resource Dependency Theory and a key variable that shapes the activities and behaviour of organisations. According to Resource Dependency, an organisation's behaviour will be influenced as a consequence of its dependent state.⁹¹ In other words, if an organisation is dependent on another for resources, the less dependent organisation may hold a degree of influence over the more dependent one. Once interests between organisational actors differ and one actor is reluctant to change its behaviour to accommodate another, power is the likely determinant.⁹² The organisational actor with discretion over allocating resources only has power if it has the ability to articulate a credible threat of withdrawal of those resources, otherwise, if both organisations are equally dependent, neither one has an influential advantage over the other.⁹³

The aforementioned behaviour is called inter-organisational power. It develops as an outcome of the demands placed by less dependent organisational actors over more dependent ones. It interferes with organisations and their environments in as much as it affects the distribution of power within the environment. Dominance over an organisation is a direct effect of the resource dimension between actors, which in turn determines the distribution of power.

The external environment impacts an organisation's distribution of power. Pfeffer and Salancik emphasise a loose coupling between the environment and organisations,

“A focus on the “how” of change leads one to consider who brings change about and who resists it..If change is a consequence of decisions, who is empowered to take actions that alter the organisation become critical. One is inevitably led to consider who controls the organisation and how such power and influence distributions arise.”⁹⁴

The main point here is that organisational actions or reactions are, in effect, the consequence of political processes.⁹⁵ An organisation's need for vital resources is linked to processes involving both internal and external power. The distribution of power influences decision-making in an organisation, which, as a consequence, affects its structures and practices. As the external environment constrains an organisation through a set of imposed pressures, organisational leaders will employ various strategies to gain access to the vital resources. An organisation will enlist in negotiation, arbitration, or lobbying behaviour with the external environment to acquire power. They will attempt to strategically adapt to the pressures within their environment by means of directing external dependencies to obtain some freedom from the constraints.

Organisations also undertake actions to change their internal environments in reaction to the constraints imposed by the external environment and in order to acquire vital resources.⁹⁶ Resource dependence theorists highlight that rather than complying with the demands of the dominant organisational actors, dependent organisations employ strategies to alter the situation. These strategies can be recognised as internal political decision-making processes. The leader of an organisation is in a position of controlling the political resources that affords them power.⁹⁷ They will attempt to uphold responsibility over organisational activities by adjusting to unforeseen events as they occur. As organisations are dependent upon resources such as staff, capital, legitimacy and 'patrons' to function, the leader will try to control the most vital inputs. In times of uncertainty, the leader will exercise discretionary increases or decreases in the flow of

vital resources to sub-units that they perceive to be carrying out more critical organisational tasks. A leader runs into difficulties in adapting to new stresses on the organisation, if it is tightly coupled to its environment.

As Resource Dependence Theory involves the incompatibility of demands arising from the resource interdependence of multiple organisational actors in an environment, an organisation needs to have mechanisms to deal with the external constraints placed upon it.⁹⁸ Christine Oliver has drawn from a resource dependence perspective to develop a range of strategies employed by managers to cope with dominant organisational actors within the environment.⁹⁹ Her framework will be presented later in this chapter.

2.2 Institutional Theory

Institutions as Spheres of Change

Institutional theory, also known as Institutionalism and the later versions as New Institutionalism, is a sociological perspective that is based on the influence of the institutional environment on an organisation. The first major contribution originated from Philip Selznick in 1949,¹⁰⁰ followed by other key contributions by Meyer and Rowan and DiMaggio and Powell.¹⁰¹ The contemporary institutional framework combines the political, economic and cultural-cognitive elements to examine an organisation's environment to describe how and why change occurs.

At the core of Institutional Theory is certainly an understanding of an institution; according to Scott,

“Institutions are social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience. [They] are composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life. Various types of carriers, including symbolic systems, relational systems, routines, and artefacts, transmit institutions. Institutions operate at different levels of jurisdiction, from the world system to localized

interpersonal relationships. Institutions by definition connote stability but are subject to change processes, both incremental and discontinuous.”¹⁰²

Otherwise put, institutions are cognitive, normative or behavioural systems. A crucial distinguishing feature of a social institution is its propensity towards stability and persistence. When an environment is stable, institutions are taken for granted; however in turbulent times their ability to be self-evident can quickly change. This denotes a weakness in the strength or extent in which an institution is established in the environment.

Organisations are perceived as forming a specific institutional environment. Beliefs, ideas and values are the ingredients that make up each institutional environment.¹⁰³ The collection of organisations in a certain field subsequently places pressure and prescriptions on each other to adopt the relevant social institutions. Thus, it can be said that *institutionalisation* is a process by which organisations transmit what is socially valid.

The evolution of Institutional Theory spans back as early as the time of Marx and Weber. The first key studies emerged in the 1950s and examined the character and competence of an organisation. Philip Selznick contributed with the first major study on the Tennessee Valley Authority.¹⁰⁴ In his seminal case study, Selznick advanced an institutional perspective on how a governmental organisation adjusts to its political environment.

The Normative Environment of Organisations

Selznick’s work concentrated chiefly on issues of influence, competing values, power and informal structures of individual organisations. He proposed that an organisation’s character is rooted in its facility to uphold standards, while dealing with external threats over the course of time. Its behaviour is autonomous and efficient, where it strategically employs its own devices to adapt to the environment in order to secure legitimacy and survival. He also recognised that during the course of adapting to the environment, an organisation may change its mission or objectives.¹⁰⁵

Selznick observed that over time, certain organisations tended to take on specific competences, or incompetence's. According to him, an organisation becomes institutionalised when it engages in a process that leads to its distinguishing characteristics, such as attaining a particular proficiency or a "learned incapacity".¹⁰⁶ This, he defined, as the process of institutionalization, where "the emergence of orderly, stable, socially integrating patterns out of unstable, loosely organized, or narrowly technical activities".¹⁰⁷ In society it is possible to locate many valuable and constructive patterns, while at the same time, cases of "learned incapacity", based on damaging and destructive activities, are also prevalent.

A central focus of institutionalisation is the patterns of interests, with special attention on the beliefs and actions of those in power that outline the course of an organisation. This stems from the fact that an organisational structure is a social system comprised of, and dependent upon, the "organisational participants" involved. The key "institutionalization agent" (or manager in the case of NGOs) plays a fundamental role in positioning values within an organisation. Through the course of time, and as an organisation develops its identity, an elaborate value set emerges. The main responsibility of a manager is to inspire the other personnel to preserve these values through advancing the organisational identity and developing its expertise.¹⁰⁸ The manager is accountable to consider the competencies both in the short and long run of the organisation, thereafter basing decisions and strategies.

Determining whether a pattern, for example a particular practice has been institutionalised within an organisation is consistent with the ease in which the practice can be adjusted or discontinued if the environment requires it. According to Selznick, once an organisation becomes infused with value, the participants will try to preserve these values.¹⁰⁹ A fundamental difficulty for an organisation is when daily routines and practices become valued as the objective, while sight of the original goal is inadvertently displaced.¹¹⁰ In this respect, organisational structures become suffused with value, they adapt beyond the technical requirements of their mission, to the extent that they may not realise the goals they first set out to achieve.¹¹¹

Selznick's work proposed that institutionalization constrains an organisation's behaviour because it places it within a normative context. Organisations have a formal mission but they are also infused with competing values, which are based on conflicting interests, beliefs and norms that can redirect an organisation from its original goals. Problem solving in an organisation is a reflection of the interconnectedness of norms in the environment. Consequently, this influences how an organisation recognizes what is a problem, the criteria for its analysis and who takes part in finding the solution.

In the 1970s, other perspectives on organisational analysis emerged that discarded the view that organisational structure was primarily based on normative behaviours and values, and was determined by informal interactions and patterns. Rather, "New Institutionalism" shifted focus to the idea of conforming to inter-organisational influences within an organisational field and especially highlighting the cognitive processes to explain the behaviours of organisational actors.¹¹² This new institutional framework combines the political, economic and cognitive elements to examine an organisation's environment and the changes that occur.

The Organisational Field

Instead of the idea of organisational adaptation to the environment, New Institutionalists, DiMaggio and Powell, have proposed that an organisation's behaviour must be examined according to its organisational field.

Organisations operate in a system comprised of overlapping and at times contradictory regulatory, legal, and political institutions. Organisations gain the legitimacy and resources needed to survive, irrespective of their productive efficiency, primarily because they become analogous to the complex institutional environment.¹¹³ The environment can be characterised as an inter-organisational system that involves other organisations, branches of government, private sector actors, and other interest groups. This type of system can be understood as an organisational field that consists of "*those organisations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organisations that produce similar services or products.*"¹¹⁴

In studying organisational change processes, a key advantage of focusing on the field level is that the connectedness of the totality of actors is recognized, rather than merely looking at, for example, the sector.

An organisational field experiences change processes as an outcome of the variety and number of organisational participants, the features of the institutional logics, and the kinds of governance systems. However, the structure of an organisational field is not easily changed and as a consequence it institutionally acts as a constraint on resolving problems that emerge.

A Cognitive Perspective in Institutionalism

New Institutionalism is similar to the earlier version in that it refers to institutionalisation as “the process by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and action.”¹¹⁵ However, the two versions differ in that New Institutionalists have set their sights on the influence of cognitive aspects of social institutions rather than the predominance of normative ones.

Individuals and organisations behave in a certain manner and make choices not only according to rules, or because the action is appropriate, or even out of social obligation, but because there is no other conceivable alternative. Taken for granted procedures and routines are practiced because they are considered as normal, everyday behaviour. New Institutionalism focuses on the socially constructed nature of institutions and their influence on individuals’ behaviours.

The Three Pillars of Institutionalism

In an attempt to bring cohesion between early and later versions of institutionalism, Richard Scott’s has elaborated on the interrelationship among organisational and institutional arrangements.¹¹⁶ He offers a thesis that institutional forces could be recognised as being located within three separate pillars. These pillars, otherwise known as institutional influences, are: the regulative pillar, the normative pillar and the cognitive pillar.

Central to the *regulative* pillar is the element of coercion. Organisations are coerced into conforming to regulative institutional pressures as a result of “rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities”.¹¹⁷ This notion is based on the logic of instrumentality, where organisational participants rationally comply with the rules in order to pursue their own self-interest and avoid penalties.¹¹⁸ According to this pillar, organisations will behave rationally because it is in their best interest to do so.

The *normative* pillar emphasizes that organisations comply with institutional pressures because it is appropriate. The role of normative systems is to impose constraints on social behaviour, authorize and facilitate social action, and to provide a basis for stability in society.¹¹⁹ Scott argues that normative systems consist of values and norms where, “*values* are conceptions of the preferred or the desirable, together with the construction of standards to which existing structures or behaviour can be compared and assessed. *Norms* specify how things should be done; they define legitimate means to pursue valued ends.”¹²⁰ Some values and norms apply to all members of society, however others pertain only to specific social actors who maintain prescriptions of appropriate goals and activities in an organisation, both formally and informally. The formal development of roles is according to predetermined rights, responsibilities and duties; in society they are identified primarily through professions. While informally, roles are determined through interaction, where expectations guiding behaviour are cultivated over time. Organisations experience external pressure as a result of these normatively determined roles, with further pressure internalised by organisational participants embodying the specified roles themselves.

As mentioned above, the newness in Institutional Theory is largely a result of, what Scott has termed, the *cognitive* pillar. According to New Institutionalists, reality is communicated through rules and symbols, which lead to the construction of values and actions.¹²¹ The cognitive pillar views institutional conformity, in relation to there being no other conceivable way to behave. Social behaviour is a taken for granted role, which is indicated through routines and scripts. The effects of this in an organisation are such

that participants bring certain beliefs and behaviours that play a part in becoming taken for granted beliefs, ideas and values of the organisation.

Problems can arise in an organisation if it is challenged by all three institutional influences at the same time, or from a variety of different sources.¹²² For example, organisations that have multiple normative obligations may run into situations where accommodating one set of obligations undermines another set. Another challenging situation is when accommodating a moral obligation may lead to potential legal or regulative ramifications. Furthermore, an organisation may be challenged depending on the number of managing authorities, if they have divergent notions of how the operations should be conducted.

Figure 4. Three Pillars of Institutions

	Regulative	Normative	Cognitive
Basis of Conformity	Expedience	Social obligation	Taken for granted
Mechanisms	Coercive	Normative	Mimetic
Logic	Instrumentality	Appropriateness	Orthodoxy
Indicators	Rules, laws, sanctions	Certification, accreditation	Prevalence, isomorphism's
Basis of legitimacy	Legally sanctioned	Morally governed	Conceptually correct

Source: Scott 2001

2.3 A Combined Framework on Organisational Change

The previous sections on Resource Dependency Theory and Institutional Theory serve as a backdrop to understanding how and why organisations are structured as they are. This

section elaborates on this by presenting a framework for understanding organisational change. This is done by: first presenting DiMaggio and Powell's thesis on change as a process of conforming to the institutional environment and drawing in the active agency perspective from Resource Dependency Theory - Oliver's thesis on the strategies for resisting change.

Organisations are continually dealing with a variety of pressures, restrictions and relationships that influence their formal and informal organisational structures. When an organisation is highly dependent on the institutional environment, or if it is in a situation of high uncertainty or where objectives are ambiguous, the pressures are amplified. Where Resource Dependency Theory contends that organisational actions result from political and economic processes within organisations, a contemporary institutional framework combines the political, economic and cognitive elements in an organisation's environment to explicate how and why structural changes in organisations occur.⁴

According to New Institutionalism, organisational structures are created based on institutionally -accepted versus technically efficient distinctions. Various environmental pressures exerted on organisations are not founded on value or efficiency, but rather the result of cultural and cognitive pressures to conform to the given structure. Furthermore, even though the behaviours may not contribute to greater operational efficiency, they are regarded as legitimate.¹²³

Organisational structures that are benchmarked in a field may have less to do with task performance efficiencies as such, because once a structure is embedded, its ability to

⁴ Though it is out of the scope of this research, the notion of institutional change is an area that has been gaining more attention. Institutional Theory in general, has assumed that institutions are put in place and then exert their effects, but are not themselves subject to change. When circumstances in the wider environment, such as the political, economic, technological conditions shift, it can leave existing institutions susceptible to abrupt change. Pressures may erupt and transform as regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements move out sync. For institutional theorists, institutions are perceived as the basis of stability and constancy (Scott 2001; DiMaggio & Powell 1991). However due to the reality of multiple competing and overlapping institutional structures, the stability of institutions are continuously undermined. Institutional change takes place during the establishment of new institutional forms in individual organisations and organisational fields, as these entities are pressured to adopt new structures, practices or procedures.

endure is less dependent on its performance than on the reassuring sense of order it carries.¹²⁴ Educational institutions are often cited as examples of this phenomenon, as they devise a framework of legitimate educational categories, offering a collective normative arrangement that conceals variation in competencies and task performance.¹²⁵ This loose coupling between organisational structure and task performance illustrates how organisational structures that are not the utmost efficient nonetheless develop, and shape an organisational environment.

As the acceptance of an organisational structure increases, so does the capacity of an organisation's manager. Subsequently, they can worry less about the organisation's survival, and more about long-term organisational interests.¹²⁶ The foremost sources of standardisation of structures are the effect of the state's power to impose constancy, professionals that spread normative standards, and the propensity of management to copy apparently successful forms.

When an organisation adopts a practice near the beginning of an institutionalization process, it represents a preference, reflecting a particular need or interest. As the institutionalization process ensues, normative and cultural pressures increase and the reason for the action has "shifted from one of instrumentality to appropriateness".¹²⁷ In that way, the practice has gradually been made significant and more importantly, it is in the interest of every organisation entering the field to adopt.

Organisational Success

New Institutionalists argue that organisational change is brought on by changes within the institutional environment.¹²⁸ According to them, organisations must be both economically reliable and able to establish institutional legitimacy to be successful.

"In a resource-dependence or social exchange approach to organisations, legitimacy is typically treated as simply another kind of resource. However, from an institutional perspective, legitimacy is not a commodity to be possessed or exchanged but a condition reflecting perceived consonance with relevant

rules and laws, normative support, or alignment with cultural-cognitive frameworks."¹²⁹

Though institutional stability requires plans and resources, it is maintained through beliefs and behaviours.¹³⁰ Changes in beliefs and expectations place pressure on related activities, consequently resulting in decreased legitimacy, which then provides space for alternative structures to emerge. If problems increasingly accumulate, key constituencies may react by altering or replacing inadequate arrangements for ones that are more appropriate.

When institutional theorists first began examining organisational legitimacy they started by investigating the relationship between normative pressures and organisational goals, and the way they correspond with wider societal values.¹³¹ The emphasis was on the value systems of organisations, which sought legitimation as the social acceptance of procedural aspects and goals. Later, New Institutionalists began to shift the focus from the structure and practice of organisations, to emphasising the rituals, specialised roles and routines of an organisation.¹³² Organisations came to be viewed as entities that are directed by, and reflect, the prescriptions of the wider institutional environment. Thus, the notion of institutional legitimacy was construed to a system of social beliefs that have become rationalized.

Formal organisations multiply because of task-related causes, but are motivated based on modern rationalised myths, symbols and rituals.¹³³ Myths and symbols are taken for granted as social practice. Institutional myths are understood as technological innovation, professionalisation and expertise. The most significant sources of institutional myths, or legitimation, are the state and its regulatory agencies, professional occupations and associations. Actors providing legitimacy can vary between organisational units and the strength of their influence can also change over time.¹³⁴

These bodies have diverse levels of influence, which shape organisational structures by the imposition of requirements and also by devising and transmitting rules. These rules are rationalised myths, which are formed and sustained through means such as: public

opinion, ideologies, laws, education systems, courts, government endorsements and requirements, etc. The end products are the ontological frameworks, implied distinctions, and manufactured principles that construct social reality.

Conformity to present-day myths characterises an organisation's performance and provides it with legitimacy. Organisations operating in a similar environment observe one another and consciously or unconsciously, adapt their structure to resemble each other's. As institutional processes shape organisational structure and action, organisations respond by conforming to their institutional environment, in order to receive increased resources, legitimacy, and survival capabilities.¹³⁵ For example, structural features that are prevalent in the field are specific job titles, procedures or technologies adopted by organisations. Furthermore, organisation that implements a certain technological process is supported because of its compliance with institutionally valid structures. It is thereafter regarded as an organisation with a legitimate organisational practice. Individual organisations are more likely to survive if they take on a culturally accepted form and pursue strategies that have the support of the normative and legal establishments. An organisation's survival and its ability to conform to rationalized myths go hand-in-hand.

DiMaggio & Powell were the initial contributors in the discussion on homogeneity of organisational structures and practices by means of conformity in what they term the three types of 'isomorphism's'.³ They propose that similar patterns of change can be seen within organisations' interests and practices due to constraints within the institutional environment.¹³⁶ As organisations vie for the same resources, customers, political power and institutional legitimacy "homogeneity in organisational structures stems from the fact that despite considerable search for diversity there is relatively little variation to be selected from"¹³⁷ is not surprising. The process of homogenisation is best portrayed through the concept of isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell argue that organisations change in similar or different directions due to mimetic, coercive or normative pressures to remain legitimate.¹³⁸

³ Though it is outside of the frame of this study, Richard Scott provides a recipe for examining the early adoption of an organisational structure, it can be characterised by three classes of variables: attributes, linkages, and references groups. See Scott 2001.

Coercive isomorphism happens if an organisation's responses are similar to another organisation's because of a directive by institutional regulations. Coercive pressures are the result of both formal and informal stresses that independent organisations exert on dependent organisations.¹³⁹ Broadly, these pressures may be felt as obligation, persuasion, request to join in agreement, for example organisations may be required to conform to particular state standards, adopt new regulations, or be required to endure tax increases. Organisations are structured according to the technical and legal requirements of the state through constraints such as an organisation's annual financial report, to ensure it receives the funding. Furthermore, the state serves to institutionalise and legitimate rules, which are replicated and revealed through organisational structures.¹⁴⁰ Organisations within similar fields are becoming increasingly alike by conforming to the wider institutions. A key factor affecting organisations' structure and behaviour is a common legal environment.

Mimetic pressures are the result of uncertainty in an organisational field. In an ambiguous environmental setting, organisations are more likely to imitate the models of organisations they deem legitimate or successful – this is a process of mimetic isomorphism. An ideal type may spread from organisation to organisation subtly, unintentionally or overtly, for example, an NGDO adopting an “innovation,” such as a new overseas programme, or hiring a staff member with a particular skill set, or joining an association of NGDOs. Whether an organisation consciously or unconsciously imitates an innovation, the act entails acquiring an attribute that is partly responsible for the success of the organisation from which it models itself. Organisations are often under pressure to offer the same programmes and services provided by other organisations. As a result, “organisations tend to model themselves after similar organisations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful.”¹⁴¹

Normative isomorphism is due to an organisation changing to reflect the dominant normative structure within in an institutional environment. DiMaggio and Powell especially focus on the normative pressures in terms of professionalisation. That is, change predominantly evolves from the collective struggle of members of a profession to

establish a cognitive foundation, to define the circumstances, means and process of their work, as well as the legitimation of their occupation.¹⁴² Professional power can either be formed by the acts of professions or appointed by the state. The majority of growth of professions has been among organisational professionals, consisting primarily of managers and specialised staff. Traditionally, the role of a professional was typified somewhere between their commitment to the organisation and their professional adherence, however increasingly a professional's character is wrapped up with the affluence of the organisation employing them. Although an organisation may be comprised of a variety of disparate professions, its composition often corresponds with professional equivalents in other organisations.

Normative isomorphism is promoted during the filtering of personnel through hiring practices such as selecting individuals from organisations in the same industry, or graduates from the same university programmes, or with the same skill sets.¹⁴³ Individuals in the same field experience similar socialisation in terms of behaviour, organisational language, even the types of fashion worn in the work place – basically, a standard manner of engagement. Furthermore, problem-solving and decision-making are carried out much in the same fashion, where similar policies or procedures, considered normatively legitimate, are endorsed in a similar way. In cases where individuals have evaded the filtering process, for example a female professional in a male-dominated training, on-site socialisation is another opportunity. Socialisation can act as an isomorphic force in the organisational field, when similar organisations attend, for example the same workshops, meetings or conferences. However, when on-the-job socialisation is the primary means, potential distinctions between organisations in the field become greater.

Though the institutional environment penetrates organisations, they are skilled and resourceful in countering pressures through a number of means. Some organisations individually attempt to redefine or negotiate attempts to control their behaviour by engaging in regulatory activities. Other organisations manage their stresses through improving their credibility in the public's eye. A further approach is the strategic engagement with other organisations confronted with similar pressures. Collective

actions can also include individual attempts to manoeuvre, dispute or resist authoritative assertions. Meyer and Rowan claim that organisations facing increasing pressures often respond by decoupling their structural features from their technical activities.¹⁴⁴ If an organisation is compelled to adopt a specific structure it may prefer to react ceremonially, altering its formal structure such that it appears to conform to the environment, while shielding internal units so they may operate outside of the constraints. A characteristic feature of organisations dealing with external demands is to develop specialized administrative units to cope with the external sources.

Strategic Responses to Resist Change

Early Institutionalism was unable to explain organisational change and strategic action by individuals. Many of the criticisms of Institutional Theory derive from its focus on institutions' capacity to constrain action, while de-emphasising conflicting interests, power and a commitment to values supported through resources.

Yet, recent works by contemporary institutionalists have allocated a larger scope in this perspective. Institutional theory focuses on the deterministic aspect of the environments external influence on an organisation. It does not however, consider how organisations manage the actors in their external environment. Structural issues such as power, resources and competition are downplayed, which is why principles from Resource Dependency Theory compliments it well. A link is established between action and structure, in that individual action is constrained by structure, but it is action that preserves and changes structure.

Christine Oliver has offered a perspective that suggests that agency and strategic behaviour are shaped, but are not decided by institutionalised environments.¹⁴⁵ While organisations are products of their institutional environment, modern organisations constitute active players. Oliver's typology outlines five potential responses from organisations reacting to institutional pressures.¹⁴⁶ Her thesis is significant in that it sheds light on the active choices and strategies of organisations in relation to the pressures from their institutional environment. The strategic alternatives that Oliver offers emphasise an organisation as a self-interested entity. This interdependence leads to research questions

like: How does structure constrain an organisation? Do these constraints lead to changes over time? Why do some organisations conform to rules, while others behave strategically? She suggests that the strategies an organisation can use are also institutionally structured, which means that an organisation is also constrained in which strategies it can use.¹⁴⁷

Each of the five general strategies for resisting change has specific methods of aversion connected to them. In the following, a brief summation of the strategies of acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance and manipulation are presented, with the strategies most relevant to the study are discussed in more detail.

Strategies of *acquiescence* have received the most attention by scholars. These tactics are motivated by enhanced legitimacy, and based on notions of conformity or imitation of other organisations.¹⁴⁸ By consciously complying with perceived institutional requirements from cultural, normative or regulative authorities, organisations avoid sanctions, and instead may be rewarded with additional material resources.

Organisations that are unable to manage conspicuous conformity for reasons of “conflicting institutional demands or with inconsistencies between institutional expectations and internal organisational objectives related to efficiency or autonomy” implement strategies based on *compromise*.¹⁴⁹ This occurs most often in environments containing multiple and conflicting constituent demands, for example, where an organisation must balance stakeholder requirements for increased operations of a particular project versus public pressure to adopt a different cause. Here, an organisation must have an adequate level of vigour, and room to bargain with the various stakeholders, in order to reach some type of parity between parties. Resource Dependency Theory regards negotiation as a key practice between an organisation and the environment. A tactic with a slightly lesser level of resistance involves pacifying institutional sources. An organisation may conform to institutional pressures to a large degree but not entirely, and as a result will dedicate a considerable amount of energy in placating the opposed source.

Avoidance is a concealment effort, an attempt to buffer parts of an organisation from necessary conforming behaviours.¹⁵⁰ In an extreme circumstance, an organisation may escape the institutional sphere to circumvent the pressures exerted on it. Both Resource Dependency theorists and Institutionalists contend that avoidance is a central organisational response to institutional pressure.

Organisations that resist pressures through using strategies of *defiance* actively and publicly challenge or disobey institutional norms, rules and expectations. An unequivocal rejection of institutional pressure is apt to occur in light of diverging internal and external values and interests.¹⁵¹ If an organisation believes that it can dismiss institutional rules without having to endure sanctions from those imposing the requirements, it may ignore them. Rebellion from commonly shared beliefs is more liable when organisations fasten additional significance to their own vision of what is appropriate.

This final strategy is the most vigorous of the five reactions to institutional pressures, “*manipulation* is the most active response to these pressures because it is intended to actively change or exert power over the content of the expectation themselves or the sources that seek to express or enforce them.”¹⁵² In this occasion, an organisation prefers to disable institutional resistance and enhance legitimacy through co-opting the source of the pressure. This may be in the form of persuading a constituent to join the organisation, its board of directors or a working group. The outcome is to tactically use institutional ties to demonstrate value to external constituencies. Influence tactics are another type of response meant to manipulate institutionalised beliefs, values and practices. These are particularly useful in influencing public perception, evaluation standards and support.¹⁵³ Organisations also respond to institutional pressures by purposefully endeavouring to control external constituents through ascertaining domination over them. The objective to rule rather than influence sources or processes is more likely to come about when institutional expectations are in the initial stages or weakly endorsed. Manipulation is the most forceful method since organisations actively seek to adjust, or control institutional processes or constituents to their own advantage.

In summation, Resource Dependency Theory, as well as in early Institutional perspective,

organisational change is recognised according to an organisations history, development and adaptation in the course of responding to shifting internal and external environments.¹⁵⁴ Change is the process in which an organisational practice is discontinued or altered in response to new normative pressures. The work of New Institutionalists Meyer & Rowan and DiMaggio & Powell develops this notion by suggesting that an organisation's actions are greatly determined by social pressures to conform.¹⁵⁵

The contribution by DiMaggio and Powell on isomorphisms is useful for explaining how organisations are structured and managed, by focusing on the persistence of organisational structures, rather than how they change.¹⁵⁶ Richard Scott's elaboration in this area has offered various rationales for an organisation's pursuit for legitimacy, i.e. success. Both of these contributions on institutional mechanisms draw attention to the question of whether an organisation conforms to its environment because of expedience, social obligation, or because it is "just the way things are".

However, recent developments in institutional theory are offering insights that can contribute to a more complete understanding of organisational change, in the recognition that values function in such a way that they determine an organisation's response to institutional pressures.¹⁵⁷ Christine Oliver's thesis on how organisations resist changes in their environment takes into considerations the role of values in the process of organisational change.

⁸⁹ Hossam A. Institutional Theory. York University [online database]

<http://www.istheory.yorku.ca/institutionaltheory.htm> [accessed 01/08/2008].

⁹⁰ Pfeffer, J. *Organisations and Organisation Theory*. Boston: Pitman (1982) p.193.

⁹¹ Pfeffer 1982; Pfeffer & Salancik 2003

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ Pfeffer J. and Leong A. "Resource Allocations in United Funds: Examination of Power and Dependence" *Social Forces* 55 (1977) p.775 - 790.

⁹⁴ Pfeffer & Salancik 2003, p.227

⁹⁵ Pfeffer 1982, p.203

⁹⁶ Pfeffer 1982, p.198

⁹⁷ Pfeffer, J. *Power in Organisations*. Marshfield: Pitman (1981).

⁹⁸ Pfeffer, 1982, p.193

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- ⁹⁹ Oliver, C. "Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes" *Academy of Management Review*, 16 (1991) p.145-179.
- ¹⁰⁰ Selznick, P. *TVA and the Grass Roots*. Berkley: University of California Press (1949).
- ¹⁰¹ Greenwood, R. & C. R. Hinings. "Understanding Radical Organisational Change: Bringing together the Old and the New Institutionalism" *Academy of Management Review*, 21:4 (1996) p. 1022-1054, p.1023.
- ¹⁰² Scott, W. R. *Institutions and Organisations*. (2nd ed) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications (2001) p.48.
- ¹⁰³ Meyer J. and Rowan B. "Institutionalised Organisation: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," in *The New Institutionalism in Organisational Analysis*. (eds) W. Powell & P. DiMaggio. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1991) p.41-62.
- ¹⁰⁴ Selznick, P. *TVA and the Grass Roots*. Berkley: University of California Press (1949).
- ¹⁰⁵ Selznick, op. cit. 1949; also in P. Selznick, "Institutionalism "Old" and "New," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41 (1996) p. 270- 277.
- ¹⁰⁶ Selznick, op. cit 1949; Selznick, P. *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. New York: Harper & Row (1957).
- ¹⁰⁷ Selznick, 1996, p. 271
- ¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁹ Selznick, op. cit., 1949
- ¹¹⁰ *ibid.*
- ¹¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹¹² DiMaggio, P. & Powell, W. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organisational Fields" in *The New Institutionalism in Organisational Analysis*. (eds.) P. DiMaggio & W. Powell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1991) p.64-65.
- ¹¹³ Meyer & Rowan 1991
- ¹¹⁴ DiMaggio & Powell 1991
- ¹¹⁵ op. cit. Meyer, J & B. Rowan., p.42.
- ¹¹⁶ Scott 2001
- ¹¹⁷ Scott, op. cit. p.52.
- ¹¹⁸ *ibid.* p.52
- ¹¹⁹ *ibid.* p.58
- ¹²⁰ *ibid.* p.55
- ¹²¹ *ibid.* p.57
- ¹²² *ibid.*
- ¹²³ DiMaggio & Powell 1991; Meyer & Rowan 1991
- ¹²⁴ Meyer & Rowan 1991
- ¹²⁵ Brint S. & Karabel J. "Institutional Origins and Transformations" in *The New Institutionalism in Organisational Analysis*. (eds.) P. DiMaggio & W. Powell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1991) p.342.
- ¹²⁶ DiMaggio & Powell 1991
- ¹²⁷ Scott, op. cit., p.164

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- ¹²⁸ DiMaggio & Powell 1991; Oliver 1991; Scott, W. “Unpacking Institutional Arguments” in *The New Institutionalism in Organisational Analysis*. (eds) W. Powell & P. DiMaggio. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1991) p.164-182.
- ¹²⁹ Scott, op. cit., p.59
- ¹³⁰ Scott 2001
- ¹³¹ Selznick, op. cit., 1949
- ¹³² Meyer & Rowan 1991
- ¹³³ ibid.
- ¹³⁴ Scott 2001, p.157
- ¹³⁵ ibid. p.155
- ¹³⁶ DiMaggio & Powell 1991
- ¹³⁷ ibid. p.70
- ¹³⁸ ibid.
- ¹³⁹ ibid.
- ¹⁴⁰ Meyer & Rowan 1991
- ¹⁴¹ DiMaggio & Powell 1991, p.70
- ¹⁴² ibid. p.71
- ¹⁴³ ibid. p.71
- ¹⁴⁴ Meyer, J. & Rowan B. “Institutionalised Organisations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony” in *The New Institutionalism in Organisational Analysis*. (eds.) P. DiMaggio & W. Powell, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1991) p. 41-62.
- ¹⁴⁵ Oliver, C. “Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes.” *Academy of Management Review*, 16 (1991) p.145-179
- ¹⁴⁶ ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ ibid.
- ¹⁴⁸ ibid. p.152
- ¹⁴⁹ ibid. p.153
- ¹⁵⁰ ibid. p.155
- ¹⁵¹ ibid. p.157
- ¹⁵² ibid. p.157
- ¹⁵³ ibid. p.158
- ¹⁵⁴ Selznick, op. cit, 1949
- ¹⁵⁵ Meyer & Rowan 1991; DiMaggio & Powell 1991
- ¹⁵⁶ DiMaggio & Powell 1991
- ¹⁵⁷ Greenwood & Hinings 1996

CHAPTER 3 – An Understanding of Hunger Alleviation

The past half-century has seen continual developments in the study of hunger and its determinants. Thus, in order to examine the behaviours of the CFGB in the battle against hunger, it is essential to contextualise the NGDO according to the contemporary notion of the term. The debate over providing food aid is generally understood in relation to the evolution of the notion of hunger. Thus, this chapter is in two main parts: 1) a history of responding to hunger, focusing primarily on the main development program - food aid and its many points of contention; 2) to the current global discourse by the United Nations on tackling hunger – a “food security framework”.

3.1 The Evolution of Hunger

The need for hunger alleviation programmes arises from a populations’ vulnerability to food shortages within a specific area. These programmes were seen as the answer to the dramatic number of lives lost during the first half of the twentieth century. The period up until the 1970s was the worst ever for mortality due to food scarcity with an estimated 70-80 million deaths.¹⁵⁸ Food crises such as the Soviet famines in the 1920s or the devastating famines during China’s ‘great leap forward’ in the 1960s, took many forms but the most implicit factor affecting all food deficits was the natural environment. Traditionally, food crises were initiated by natural disasters, however an emergency could follow if the region had a weak local economy and suffered from political vulnerability.¹⁵⁹

Since the 80s, the majority of food insecure incidences have unfolded in Africa, where the climatic, economic and political conditions reeked with uncertainty. These triggers lead the way towards a large number of food crises in the shape of natural and manmade disasters, from drought and flooding, to conflict. A food crisis ensues due to a combination of the aforementioned conditions and a lack of political will on the part of recipient governments and international agencies.¹⁶⁰ Populations vulnerable to food insecurity are generally the most marginalized, impoverished and least powerful groups.

Currently, populations in East, West and Southern Africa alone, are facing food crises, affecting more than 37 million people.¹⁶¹

The past 25 years has seen a significant increase in the number of drought-inflicted regions in Africa. Cases of environmental degradation, forest extraction, decreasing biodiversity, etc. have affected the climactic balance of many parts of the continent resulting in natural disasters such as flooding or persistent water scarcity. This has also resulted in a swelling in the number of cases of chronic malnutrition, especially among women and children.¹⁶² Fortunately, many types of famines, especially those due to drought, have a slow onset, and can be detected months before they occur.

Conflict and war are other major stumbling blocks in the battle to eliminate food insecurity. During times of conflict, the loss of valuable food production systems in rural areas increases significantly. Wars take place mainly in the countryside, leaving the rural population vulnerable to starvation as a result of depleted reserves or means, and even access to the marketplace is often a difficult task.¹⁶³ A further bedfellow of conflict is when food is used as a weapon of war. There are many instances where regular or relief food supplies have deliberately been held back as a means to manipulate and rule a selected group.¹⁶⁴

No matter the scenario, chronic food shortages exist and are on the rise. Since the 1950s, the favoured international response to food emergencies has been shipments of food aid from the highly industrialised and agriculturally rich nations. Initially, its primary purpose was as a surplus disposal mechanism for highly industrialised nations to politically friendly allies during a food crisis, but only so far as it did not undercut the commercial food exports to that country.¹⁶⁵ The United States (US) was the first to set up a legal framework for food aid. In 1954, the United States Public Law 480 (PL480) was enacted as a surplus disposal mechanism to deal with the excess food stocks that result from the US government's strategy of 'direct' agriculture practices. The US pursues an agricultural practice of low-quality, high quantity cereals, in contrast to the European 'indirect' practice of high-quality lower quantity cereal production.¹⁶⁶ By the mid-50s

Canada, too, had established its food aid act and became the other predominant provider of food aid.¹⁶⁷

At this point in time, the intention in the provision of surplus stocks was to remedy the distributional problem of food so that nations could achieve a degree of self-sufficiency, and open up new export markets.¹⁶⁸ This was carried out through bilateral negotiations between donor and recipient nations. The vast majority of bilateral aid was provided in the form of programme food aid, which is a practice of providing commodities directly to the recipient government for sale on their domestic market. A second form of food aid, although bilaterally not as heavily pursued as the previous, was relief food aid, the direct distribution of food to victims of man-made or natural disasters. In general, this form of emergency aid has been and continues to be largely dispersed through multilateral agencies. The third type of transaction is project food aid, which centres on food aid as a development tool through projects such as in Food-For-Work or School Feeding programmes.³ It is rare to find bilateral food aid transactions in this form, as donor governments today, generally rely on NGOs to carry out such efforts.

There are a variety of organisational actors involved in alleviating hunger. At the multilateral level, United Nations' agencies offer a wide-array of global programmes for persons suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) is the specialized agency with the task of responding to disasters and emergencies around the world, while the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is responsible for global initiatives concerning longer-term development strategies typically focused on agriculture. UNICEF plans and implements programmes concerning basic nutrition for women and children, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) offers many food distribution programmes to refugees within their camps.

NGDOs are often regarded as more effective in delivering services during a food crisis than governments in less industrialised nations, as their motivating factors have been

³ For additional information on development food aid types and descriptions of projects see: http://www.wfp.org/operations/introduction/development_projects.asp?section=5&sub_section=1 [January 4, 2008]

based on humanitarian principles rather than for example, political or economic ones. NGDOs have often been considered equal if not more legitimate actors in social welfare in the public's eye, especially religion-based organisations that have long histories in low-income regions. This accomplishment has enabled NGDOs to attempt original and forward-looking development services for recipients of their programmes.

A key role for NGDOs is to develop, promote and implement strategies to assist vulnerable people in alleviating food insecurity in a region. They play a key intermediary and implementing function between the donor and recipient nations and carry out many diverse types of bilateral programmes. However, in regards to the practice of providing food aid, the past 30 years have seen much debate around the social, economic political and environmental implications concerning its provision.

Since the 1970s, northern-based NGDOs have been carrying out hunger eradication programmes. Although the international aid system developed post-WWII, only a small amount of NGDOs were active in the struggle to end global hunger. In the beginning, food aid was solely provided by donor governments on a bilateral basis, however the past 30 years has seen a significant increase in NGDOs as the key facilitator in the allocation of food aid. On the initiation of donor governments, these organisations served primarily as relief bringers by way of distributing food aid. The majority of involvement began in the 1980s, as the cornucopia of NGDOs appeared on the development stage. Their role has evolved from service implementers dispensing food, to improving the long-term agricultural integrity of a region, to advocating the right to food and fair trade. Large-scale global NGDOs such as Care, Oxfam and World Vision are providing both relief and development programmes, as well as policy interventions. The number and variety of NGDOs in the South are vast; they receive funds from the aforementioned donor agencies and are primarily responsible for the implementation of projects.

While NGDOs play an essential role in the development process, since the 1990s there has been growing criticism towards the effectiveness and nature of their efforts in decreasing the number of hungry persons around the globe. The legitimacy of food aid as a means to alleviate hunger has been questioned, so much as to suggest that it may

facilitate food insecurity. NGDOs say that programme food aid are in the difficult position, on the one hand they are challenged to reconsider their strategy to fight hunger and on the other, expected to respond quickly and efficiently during a food crisis. While the appropriate solution remains unclear, the result is either the strengthening or weakening of a NGDOs image, and possibly a compromise to its resource base and ultimate survival.¹⁶⁹

As the food aid paradigm developed throughout the 1960s, food aid allocations continued to be provided on a bilateral basis to politically friendly allies. There were two fundamental reasons for this, the first was to reflect the political and economic goals of the donor countries foreign policy and the second reason was the provision of transfers to bolster commercial food exports.¹⁷⁰ However, the ineffectiveness of these transactions in securing food supplies was already demonstrated in the early 1970s when a new global food crisis erupted. This time food shortages were a result of a number of new factors from grain-producing countries reducing food stocks, to severe drought in Asia and the Sahel, to an increase in food prices resulting from food shortages in the Soviet Union.¹⁷¹

These events prompted the first World Food Conference in 1974, with the key purpose of identifying ways that food aid could play a more direct role in development and global food security.¹⁷² Food aid had been recognized as a short-term solution, the first step in the process of eliminating hunger, and that it must be carried out in concert with longer-term initiatives. The conference wrapped up with a new consensus on the notion of alleviating hunger.

The following decade gave rise to the emergence of a development-oriented food aid regime that resulted in the shelving of free distributions of food aid as the key instrument to ending food problems in the South, to firmly placing the focus on its value as a development tool. This led to the strengthening and establishment of national and global institutions based on the notion that food security was best achieved by linking food aid to areas such as long-term agricultural development planning, multi-year programming of food aid, and an increase in the use of multilateral channels for its distribution.¹⁷³

Food aid provisions in the 1980s are characterized by the notion of food aid as a tool for development, primarily through its integration in structural adjustment programmes to the third world. However, the commitment to development food aid was short-lived, by the mid-80s an abrupt shift saw the return of emergency food aid as the key priority of donor governments. It began with the Ethiopian famines of 1983-85, and continued with a mounting number of complex emergencies into the early 90s. Development budgets of many donor nations were slashed in order to increase funding for relief initiatives. As global conflicts began to emerge, so too, did international policies on food aid. These policies moved away from long-term and development-oriented approaches, to focusing on emergency relief. In addition, as the shift to emergency strategies took place, multilateral channels were acclaimed for their role in allocating food aid. The World Food Program (WFP) went from transferring 6% of total food aid allocations in the 1960s, to 20% in 1980s.¹⁷⁴ At the same time, a shift in food aid providers from government-to-government to that of NGOs as implementing bodies was set in motion.

In the 1990s, a further change occurred, this time in the geographical focus of food aid. During the Cold War era, regional conflicts had intensified in South-East Asia and Latin America, however the end of that era led to the eruption of widespread conflict in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. For clear political reasons, the U.S. responded with massive increases of food allocations to these regions.¹⁷⁵ But by the mid-1990s large-scale humanitarian conflicts had begun to erupt throughout Africa, and more than 50% of assistance shifted to African nations, as high numbers of displaced person and international refugees reached unprecedented levels.¹⁷⁶ By the beginning of the twenty-first century, support for transition economies and the concern over large-scale conflict had contributed to significant changes in the focus and allocation of food aid.

In the past 50 years, evolutionary changes within both the conceptual understanding of hunger, as well as the institutional environment of hunger, have guided the transformation in development strategies employed in this organisational field. Advances in research and improvements in monitoring and reporting mechanisms have lead to the recognition that the providing food relief to a region suffering from food shortages does not offer a lastly solution. For that reason, many donor governments moved away from

approaches based solely on providing food at the national level to efforts to ensure longer-term sustainability at the local level. The next section is an explicit elaboration on the institutional framework for understanding hunger, which has been developing throughout the past half century.

GMOs in Food Aid

The last 50 years has seen many changes in relation to food aid, shifts in distribution, geographical focus, and from emergency to development projects. Besides these evolutionary changes, there have also been many problems surrounding the provision of food aid: issues of dumping (free) food aid on local markets, as well as the monetization of food aid at the local and national levels – each have caused great strain on farmers livelihoods by undercutting local prices and affecting local and national markets. These problems have mainly to do with effects on national and local economies and the resultant social problems. In addition to the many other symptoms of food aid, the latest concern surrounds the ecological health or integrity of parts of hunger-affected countries through the introduction of GMOs into food aid. An awareness of GMOs in food aid is significant for understanding the considerations involved in a NGOs planning, operations and resources for alleviating hunger. What's more, this issue reveals another key element in the study, the complexities of the relationship between NGOs and the multinational Agribusiness industry.

“It is a noble cause to feed the hungry. But to use this to advocate for products whose safety has not been determined beyond reasonable doubt is unethical. In my culture, we say that one does not look into the mouth of a goat that has been given free of charge. This is to say that one should appreciate what has been given as a free gift. But this does not mean that one should eat a sick goat just because it is given free.”

Eunice Kamaara, Kenya¹

Since the early 1990s, the Agribusiness industry has been supplying GM seeds, inputs and financial contributions to organisations working to alleviate hunger. At the heart of the disagreement on GM crops in food aid is the fact that GMOs have only been on the market since the 1990s and thus the long-term effects of GM products remains undecided. It can be argued that the growing uncertainty over the safety of GM crops is

also an explanation for Agribusiness's interest in the proliferation of food aid, given that GM varieties of maize, canola oil, and soy, are three commodities commonly provided in food aid allocations.

Since the mid-90s, the international movement of GMOs had been a heated issue, but mostly between Europe and North America. Then, by the turn of the century, the discussion concerning GM contamination had reached developing countries. The adoption of the Biosafety Protocol² in 2003, by 87 United Nations member states¹⁷⁷ is testament to the insecurity surrounding GMOs.

The debate over GMOs in food aid in particular, erupted in 2000 when it was discovered that GM food aid was being shipped to several developing nations without prior consent, even though many of the countries had national regulations in place safeguarding against the introduction of non-native crop varieties. For example, Ecuador received a shipment of GM soy through a multilateral transaction from the US via the WFP.¹⁷⁸ Eventually the shipment was destroyed. A further incident occurred in 2002 in Bolivia while the country had a moratorium towards GM food aid. In this case, a GM variety of maize called StarLink, characterized by the US as not fit for human consumption, was discovered in a food aid transfer from the US.¹⁷⁹ During this period, many shipments of GMO soy, soy flour and maize were discovered all over the globe from Uganda to Bosnia, India to Guatemala.¹⁸⁰

The US is the key force spearheading the endorsement of GMOs, however a variety of global agencies have also joined the bandwagon. During the southern African humanitarian crisis, the US government argued that GMO food aid was healthful and

² The Biosafety Protocol entered into force in Sept. 2003 and is meant to promote the safety of international trade in GMOs. The Protocol requires an internet-based "Biosafety Clearing-House" to aid countries in exchanging scientific, technical, environmental and legal information about GMOs will be established. In addition, an advance informed agreement (AIA) procedure will be established for exporters to seek consent from importers before the first shipment of GMOs are to be introduced into the environment. It stipulates that bulk shipments of GMO commodities that are intended to be used as food, feed or for processing, are to be accompanied by documentation stating that such shipments "may contain" genetically modified organisms and are "not intended for intentional introduction into the environment." However, the Protocol does not address issues related to consumer preference and does not require consumer product labelling. Furthermore, it does not require detailed identification requirements for bulk commodity shipments.

would have no adverse effects on the environment. The World Health Organisation (WHO) also supported the American position by reaffirming that GM foods have no harmful effects on a person's health.¹⁸¹ Moreover, the WFP remarked that they were confident in the safety of GM food aid and that governments who reject it are not interested in the wellbeing of their people.¹⁸² Only the EU, which at that time had firm restrictions on the import of GM foods, made statements against the provision of GM relief. However it is interesting to note that during the crisis the EU did not offer alternative assistance and currently have opened their borders to GM foodstuffs.

International NGDOs as well as United Nations agencies are all basically abiding by the requirements stipulated in the Biosafety Protocol. The American-based organisation CARE, a strong member of the food aid coalition, is a strident and well-funded lobby organisation for the big American-based NGDOs that receive tens of millions of dollars from USAID in the form of food. While conducting fieldwork in Nairobi I met with some members of the CARE staff; they offered their concerns over the nature of the current food aid regime. Dan Maxwell, head of CARE East Africa and co-author of the book *Food Aid after 50 Years*^φ, shared some of debate that CARE went through on the GMO issue,

“...we had a huge debate about GMOs, and somebody who was an international member of staff said you cannot let people starve when there is food sitting here and hungry people there, I will see to it that the food is processed so that it doesn't perpetuate the problem, in other words, mill it. And the response to that was that it came from one of our most professorial, intellectual Kenyans, he said so you would blow the entire future of a country's potential to trade with the EU, on the basis of saving a few lives! And that was the nub of the argument....But anyway the philosophical issue was the

^φ *Food Aid After 50 Years* (Routledge 2005) is a vigorous analysis of northern food aid, its links to agribusiness and to GMOs. The book provides an in-depth description of the American food aid regime, which comprises 60% of global food aid, and its drive from the 'iron triangle'. This 'iron triangle' involves the big American NGDOs, shipping companies and large-scale grain traders. Maxwell argues that in actuality, they are the three main interest groups that benefit from the massive American food aid programme, and they are extremely dependent on the continual provision of food aid from the States.

humanitarian imperative or the long-term consideration and I don't think we've come to grips with that as an industry, because we all say we do both, and in some circumstances we do a good job of doing both, but in other circumstances we don't deal with the pointed end of some of these questions. “ Dan Maxwell, CARE East Africa, Kenya

Ethical questions surrounding GMOs have come to the fore. Many NGOs are beginning to move past the initial concern of saving lives to beg the question - is it in the best interest of the people in the long term? World Vision in East Africa uses a practical process in determining the organisations perspective on GMOs. Next the Senior Advisor for World Vision in Nairobi explains their rationale behind GMOs,

“When we started the response in South Africa with the drought in 2002, [there was] the issues of GMO, especially in Zambia, they refused to get GMOs. So World Vision came up with a position – not a policy – just a position paper, whereby we avoid distributing grains when they are GMO, but at the same time we will not accept GMO seeds. We simply recognize that we are involved in food distribution for life saving, so if people are hungry we will not say this is or isn't GMO, especially because there is no real science saying that demonstrates GMO is bad, so that is why we do distribute GMO food, but we will continue to monitor the science as we get more information with GMOs.” Senior Advisor, World Vision East Africa, Kenya

The convoluted perspective at World Vision is a reflection of the uncertainties surrounding GMOs. The organisation has taken the position that it will not provide GM seeds during free distribution of food aid, however it is not against the use of GM aid in emergency situations. This situation is not so different than that of the WFP in Kenya, concerning the proliferation of GMOs. In the next narrative, the program advisor from WFP in Kenya, speaks to the nature of the multilateral organisations' perspective,

“The GMO question has arisen but the government of Kenya has decided to accept milled maize....We've never had any problems with GMO. They

[partners] never raised it, it's with the donors. The Americans have been more concerned than anybody else. They don't want to send ships that are then turned back and not allowed on docks. The government of Kenya has taken an American attitude, you know the areas that we are working are not crop producing areas or most of the areas, we're working in the arid area's and the slums. So the biosafety issues are not really there.... And the official position on GMOs of WFP is that it's purely a national government decision. That's why I said that the government of Kenya's approach has been basically accepting, and they've made it clear that the milled maize is preferred so we can provide that."

Program advisor, WFP Kenya

The WFP officer relays that the legitimacy over GM food aid provisions has been left up to the choice of national governments. This perspective seems to be the most popular among NGOs, leaving the responsibility in the hands of the recipient nations.

Furthermore, a number of academics are becoming involved in the discussion of GMOs in Canada. A Canadian food security expert at Ryerson University involved in international development and hunger, describes the dichotomy between the issue of GMOs,

"GMOs as a new technology can potentially be a good thing, but potentially be harmful. Technology is just a tool, in the right hands it can respond to societal needs and be effective, but when it is just used as a profit motive the societal needs are likely to be secondary. In that sense, I prefer to be cautious."

Mustaffa Koch, Ryerson, Toronto

The decision to reject or accept a technology that has been promoted as the solution to agricultural troubles in less industrialised nations, though little is provided to substantiate the claim, is a difficult one to make for governments and farmers alike. I also met on more than one occasion with prominent and active food systems analyst from Western Canada, has travelled across the country to raising questions on the underlying

foundation of agricultural technologies. To put this in perspective, in the next quote he question the nature of the current food system,

“How do you measure success, what are you measuring? Do you look at what does this field produce, well it produces 10 kilos of rice, and rice is what you’re supposed to be producing..Okay well if you follow the green revolution, do what we tell you, you can be producing 20 – 30kilos of rice out of that field, so they do what they’re told and yield goes up..then they say there seems to be some problems in our community there seems to be some deficiency of vitamin A, so they say okay we’ll give you some ‘improved rice’ that will address that problem, then some people go back and say let’s see..well you’re measuring that crop and say it’s progress but what was else was in that field...well, depending on where you are, there were snails that used to grow in that paddy, and they were harvested after the rice was harvested, and they were a significant source of protein. And what was growing along the dikes? Leafy vegetables, [and] if you started using pesticides well that killed all of those. And what else was growing, some other crop - but none of those get measured. And that’s the problem with our agriculture, you only measure one variable, that’s lousy science. I can get quite angry with the manipulation that goes on in the private sector, the abuse that they engage in, dishonest behaviour in the name of helping people, its just appalling.” Brewster Kneen, Food Systems Analyst, British Columbia

There are so many different issues surrounding GM from the question of contaminating native crops, to the safety of consuming GM foods. The pressures that farmers in developing countries are facing in taking on GM production is convoluted. A spokeswoman from a Canadian farmers association that works with farmers in developing nations explains about the problems for farmers,

“Right now I know there’s a lot of pressure from the US for Africans to plant GMO cotton. There was a big conference in November and December about GMO cotton, in Senegal or Burkina Faso. So farmers groups from all around

West Africa went there, and it's interesting to note that it was subsidized by USAID. They really pushed trying to have all these countries get into GMO cotton, so really right now what I'm hearing from the countries we're working with, that it's really a dilemma, they see that it might be more profitable in the short-term to grow GMO corn or cotton because it will make them less dependent on inputs, but on the other side what will happen when it fails. Just have one variety of something and it fails." Program officer, NGDO4

Later in the interview, she illustrated the difficulties and potential consequences associated with farming GM crops,

"A problem with GMO is the genetic uniformity of it is greater than with regular seeds. So once the resistance to the pest is overcome, then the pests spread like wild because there is no resistance to it.... to use GMO corn or Soya, that you have to make sure that you always have at least 20% of non-GMO that is seeded just next to the GMO to provide shelters for pests otherwise - this is for the kind of GMO that is pest resistant - otherwise you will create such a pressure on the insect community, there will be a selection of individuals that are resistant, and then they are resistant to the insect resistant crop! So in every field you need to plant a few meters all around it, or you can have strips, there are many patterns possible but you cannot use just GMO, otherwise you will get into big problems. So they (Africans) may be preoccupied about that." Program officer, NGDO4

The complexities in farming GM crops are vast. Not only that, but the message about crop diversity, to my knowledge, is not a message that has not been well communicated. Farmers in developing countries face great risk in farming GM commodities.

Where GM-related issues appear in development projects, the role of NGDOs is particularly important. A development officer from a Canadian NGDO that works to strengthen communities in developing countries through promoting food security, comments on the necessity of providing recipients with information on GM, even though it is engaged in solely providing native varieties of seeds and plants,

“It’s certainly an issue that GMO seeds are out there and we certainly want to talk about it so they [recipients of development projects] are aware of this issue. But it’s all local varieties that we use and it’s breeding for local conditions and circumstances that are changing.” Program officer, NGDO2

The subject of contamination also runs side by side with the GMO question. Consequently, many NGDOs are questioning the effects of GMOs around the world. The head of a Canadian NGDO involved in conserving cultural and ecological diversity, sums up the perspective shared by many NDGOs in the sector on GM contamination,

“If you ship GM corn to Zambia or Zimbabwe, you will get contamination; it’ll end up everywhere eventually for sure. What’s it, 1 in 9 farmers plant the seed and once it’s planted its going to get into everyone else’s varieties, over time ... there are stories out of the Philippines on GM corn, that stuff has been found in peoples guts that shouldn’t be there In Mexico, where we have an office and spend a lot of time with the GM contamination issue, its a huge factor for farmers, they are horrified by GM contamination. They take it as a personal insult, as a cultural insult, and as a religious insult. To them, corn is so central to their lives, and the fact that it has been contaminated in this way causes an amazing reaction ... I think there is a very visceral personal reaction that farmers often have to contamination. I can intellectually say that BT contamination in Mexico may not be a long-term serious problem; my guess is that it is not, that it will fade out into the genetic background of the population and not be really useful, but I don’t know that for sure. And it might not be really dangerous either. But - 1.) I’m not sure, and it’s not my business to make other people take risks for sloppy technologies and it’s certainly a sloppy technology. And 2.) The reality is that the stuff coming down the track in terms of other traits, that may well leak into the Mexican crops are far more serious. They are veterinarian products, pharmaceutical products for people that may well show up in the corn crops. And the same sloppy companies doing the same sloppy work are the ones doing this, so I accept and understand why they say

now no. There's no reason for them to trust the corporations and their own government. You've got the Mexican government that's totally passive in this area; they've just passed the biodiversity law, which allows for 5% of the material to be contaminated. I was there testifying a few weeks ago, that 5% means that within half a dozen years you've got contamination everywhere, it'll be unstoppable, scientifically ludicrous. This is because the Mexican government is in the pocket of the US and the corporations." Executive Director, NGDO3

In summation, the majority of Canadian NGDOs are on the fence about the GM issue. As a result, most organisations have disengaged themselves from providing food aid as a development initiative – and some NGDOs are going to lengths to condemning it.

3.2 A Food Security Framework

The last 50 years have seen the emergence of a framework on food security to its contemporary construction. The following section is a chronological and theoretical view of the framework on food security. An examination of the evolution of the framework will point to the potential problems and contradictions involved in supplying aid in the form of food. Food policy analysts have outlined three significant shifts in the evolution of food security thinking – the level of analysis, the scope, and the method of measuring hunger.¹⁸³

In 1974 when the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), organised the first World Food Summit (WFS) that the establishment of a global definition on food security was originally endorsed. As previously referred to, the Summit was a reaction to the widespread global food shortages during the “world food crisis” and African famines that dominated the early 1970s. The launch of the Summit was an attempt to bring together the world heads of state in hopes of determining a strategy to eradicate hunger in view of the rapidly expanding population - within the decade. In order to deal with the first global concern for food security, in 1975 an agreement between the heads of state, termed

it as “..the availability at all times of adequate world supplies of basic food-stuffs...to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption...and to offset fluctuation in production and prices”.¹⁸⁴ The initial definition was primarily a supply-based notion, where national economies were “food secure” so long as there was a sufficient quantity of food stocks within their borders. This conventional method of determining food security used world grain prices as the key indicator.¹⁸⁵ Needless to say, one decade later not only had decreasing food shortages failed to happen, but the global number of food insecure persons had risen dramatically.

At the outset, the global perception of food security was such that the key to ensuring the food supply was in ensuring national level self-sufficiency.¹⁸⁶ However, field studies conducted in the early 1970s in relation to the African famines demonstrated that contrary to the notion of national self-reliance, widespread hunger did exist within nations that had an ample supply of food stocks. This was followed by the release of Amartya Sen’s seminal work on entitlement in *Poverty and Famines*. It revealed that rather than focussing on the nation, household access to food was indeed the vital consideration.¹⁸⁷ He illustrated that while the availability of food supplies were essential, access to food by individuals was a greater constraint. Sen asserted that individuals who were afforded entitlements such as resources, technology, markets, social networks or food transfer programmes were not as susceptible to food insecurity. This led to a further shift in the level of analysis, from the national stratum to an understanding of the household (or individual),^f as the main unit of analysis.

The second paradigm shift emerged in the mid-1980s as a consequence of new African famine that erupted in 1984. The research that transpired from the crisis confirmed a discrepancy in the scope of the food security perspective. It involved an adjustment from the view that short-term nutritional intake was the only objective that people pursued, to

^f As the issue of intra-household power and resource allocation is a point of contention between researchers, ambiguities still remain whether the unit of analysis should be on the individual or the household. However, for the purpose of ease reference will only be made to the household, although it is not the intent to provide a judgment on the subject.

that of a livelihood point of view, where households developed coping strategies in order to manage vulnerable situations.¹⁸⁸

In the mid-1980s, inconsistencies between organisations and researchers attempting to quantify food consumption were becoming dramatically apparent. By the early 1990s the third key paradigmatic shift transpired concerning the method of measuring global malnutrition - from a subjective understanding of food security to an objective one. To take the example of caloric intake, nutritional requirements for an individual need to be based on level of activity, body size, past food intake etc., obviously measurements of this nature, could only be considered as rough estimates as individuals had to be considered 'on average'.¹⁸⁹ Additional questions arose as to which 'body(s)' was appropriate, i.e. the food secure versus insecure, to make this type of value judgement. It was acknowledged that to understand the extent of the persons that were considered to be food insecure by *objective* means was controversial and potentially biased. Instead, what emerged was an understanding that examining the number of insecure persons this should be undertaken by *subjective* measurements.¹⁹⁰ It was during this period that subjective indicators such as cultural acceptability, technical food quality and consistency with local food habits, were at last recognized in the evaluation of food security in the third world.¹⁹¹

At last in the 1990s, as a result of the recurring global food problems over the past decades, a food security framework developed to encompass qualitative data in the collection and evaluation processes, in addition to the necessity of recognizing the household as the unit of analysis, and finally the requirement that food security must be considered from a livelihood perspective, led to a comprehensive and valuable understanding of the notion.

In 1996, the international community came together again to discuss the past failures and the way forward through an improved understanding of global food security. The second WFS was a platform to discuss topics such as the long-term sustainability of the environment, weather-related crop failures and the record-low levels of global food reserves that had plagued the decade.¹⁹² The Rome Declaration was formulated and

accepted as the current explanation of food security,“..all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritional food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.¹⁹³ Besides this improved conception of food security, a significant outcome of the WFS was the endorsement of the FAO as the guiding body in addressing food security. The rationale to support this endorsement read,

“The Rome declaration identifies poverty and environmental degradation as the main causes of food insecurity. The Heads of State and their governments also recognized the need for urgent action to combat natural resource degradation, including desertification and erosion of biological diversity. Poverty eradication and food security must be achieved without putting additional stress on natural resources. In many situations, therefore, food security and natural resource protection go together.”¹⁹⁴

The declaration pointed to the health of the agricultural system, specifically in maintaining its biodiversity, as a key factor in safeguarding national food security, and declared that the appropriate body for this task was the FAO.

The past half-century have seen contributions to research on global food shortages that have led to a number of transformations in the food security framework and in the wake of globalising forces the current framework will likely continue to evolve. However, the current international understanding of food security speaks to the right of each nation to ensure access and availability to sustainable agricultural systems.¹⁹⁵ The conceptual achievement of the framework is the global acknowledgement that food security is based on household access to food.

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- ¹⁶⁰ S. Devereux (1993) *Theories of Famine*, Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- ¹⁶¹ see the World Food Programs website for current reports on the crises in these regions <http://www.wfp.org/english/> [January 4, 2008].
- ¹⁶² see UNICEF's web site for current cases concerning the effects of the current drought on children (specifically Ethiopia and Kenya) http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/27402_30911.html [January 4, 2008].
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- ¹⁷¹ *ibid.* p.441
- ¹⁷² *ibid.*
- ¹⁷³ *ibid.* p.442
- ¹⁷⁴ *ibid.* p.452
- ¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* p.455
- ¹⁷⁶ Christensen, *op cit.* p.259
- ¹⁷⁷ UNEP [online press release] *Biosafety Protocol now Operational as Governments Agree on Documentation Rules for GMO Trade*. 27 Feb. (2004) <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/envdev753.doc.htm> [accessed 01/04/2008].
- ¹⁷⁸ FOEI 2003, p.21
- ¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p.21
- ¹⁸⁰ ¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.20-21
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- ¹⁹⁴ FAO. <http://www.fao.org/WAIRDOCS/LEAD/X6131e/x6131e00.HTM> [03/01/2008]
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CHAPTER 4 – Research Design

This section is the beginning of the empirical presentation of the case study. It begins by presenting the data collection methods employed. This is followed by an introduction to the NGDO sector involved in fighting hunger, in particular the Canadian sector. Finally the main focus of the dissertation – the CFGB - is introduced.

4.1 Entering in the Field

The construction of a field can be understood in several ways. In this study, Canada as a geographical location constitutes the starting point for the research, as it is the location of the NGDO under study. Secondly, data regarding the NGDO was also collected in Kenya and Tanzania, which could also be interpreted as constituting possible sites of the research. Thirdly, the examination is not merely a general process of organisational change, but organisational change within the context of what Tvedt has termed the international “Dostango-system”.¹⁹⁶

The CFGB is a part of this field, even if it is a small-scale area of investigation. The field being examined is neither a geographical place, nor is it the headquarters of a particular organisation. Instead, the field is the international NGDO system, though it is examined from the perspective of a single NGDO with specific transformations occurring within it. The fieldwork was carried out in multiple sites during a specified period of time in order to capture the events and actors that constitute the organisational change process.

In this respect, the field of research can be interpreted as a constant construction by the researcher. During the course of the fieldwork, the field changed - it increased when more actors and locations presented themselves and then became more focused as particular connections became obsolete. The knowledge was collected in diverse geographical settings – in the offices of NGDOs in different Canadian cities, the living rooms of activists, the favourite coffee shops of academics, international conference sites, in the maize fields of Tanzania with members of grassroots organisations, and in villages and cities in Kenya with fieldworkers. The periods in Canada were spent visiting research

sites and interviewing people, while the period in Kenya and Tanzania was more intense and involved “living in the field”.

Fieldwork resulted in different sets of data from various participants in the field (see Table I.). The data indicated in the Table represents the voice-recorded interviews or data gathered through note taking. However, a great deal of data was generated by the daily contact with CFGB staff inside and out of the office and the month spent living with CFGB staff, Member fieldworkers, Member constituents and Partners, during the Food Study Tour contributed significantly to the understanding and interpretation of the unrestricted, reported and recorded communications.

4.2 Sources of Evidence

Case studies that are longitudinal in nature recommend combinations of different data collection methods to increase reliability.¹⁹⁷ This refers to the extent in which the results of a study are consistent, in the sense that the same conclusion would be reached if identical data and theory were used by another researcher.¹⁹⁸ Using a case study approach also allows for a variety of sources, which serve to strengthen the research and limit the tendency to reflect personal bias.¹⁹⁹ As the nature of any discussion runs the risk of reflecting ethical or normative predispositions of the researcher, the reliability of the findings in this case have been buttressed through a process of triangulation. By using multiple data sources through different lines of inquiry, this technique corroborates, or not, similar facts or phenomena thereby lessening the tendency of constructing validity.²⁰⁰ This approach allows for a variety of sources, which strengthen the research and limit the tendency to reflect personal bias.²⁰¹

Between December 2004 and July 2005, a variety of informal conversations, extensive document analysis and over 40 formal interviews were carried out. Although the number of informants within a particular sphere may appear low, a single interview brings a great deal of vital information. In addition, most of the respondents were selected because of

their role, status and knowledge in connection to the field of international development aid, as well as being familiar with the CFGB.

The primary technique for collecting data was through face-to-face interviews. The interview is a special form of human interaction where knowledge is exchanged through dialog.²⁰² The interview can provide a better opportunity to observe, discover and interpret information through the close interaction with informants. Unlike a survey with fixed questions, qualitative interviews can be located along the different stages of a continuum – from structured to unstructured, and formal to informal. Moreover, open-ended interviews, which allow the informants to talk at length about their experiences and views, can present a better opportunity for the informant to freely express their reality, as they perceive it.²⁰³ The close interaction between the researcher and the informant also provides an opportunity to understand the shape and logic associated with their arguments. Moreover, a face-to-face interview serve to incorporate the experiences, as well as the intended meaning of the informants involved, and allows the researcher to experience the full-range of characteristics such as emotional outbursts, spatial positioning, and tone of voice.²⁰⁴

The method applied during the interview process was semi-structured, open-ended and face-to-face in nature. The intention of employing this method was to obtain as much about the topic of food aid as possible, allowing for new and unscripted questions to be introduced based on the interviewees' responses. In general, the interviews consisted of a set of approximately ten questions to guide the communication. The lengths of the interviews were 60 – 90 minutes. The majority of persons interviewed held a university or college education and in general have many years of experience in the field. Furthermore, most interviews were conducted using a voice-recorder and were later transcribed word-for-word. A few exceptions were made because of the awkwardness of the setting or where recording equipment was impossible to make out the dialogue. Additionally, the use of a recording device allowed for observational notes to be taken during the interviews. Considerable attention was also paid to what was not said, as well as the implied meaning behind some of what was expressed.

The interviews with NGOs, the government and the private sector were structured in a similar fashion for consistency, though questions varied slightly according to the type of interviewee. Interview questions focused on defining the organisational structure, as a way to get insight on the orientation of the organisations and their decision-making mechanisms. They began with the details of the operational environment: programming, capacity, administrative structure, and funding scheme. This permitted the second part of the interaction to centre on the interviewee's conception of hunger alleviation and the relation to the mission of the organisation. Interviews with constituents were slightly different. They asked a set of questions relating to their experience in supporting the NGO, in addition to their knowledge and perspective on hunger-related issues.

Due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions and the fact that some interviewees from NGOs expressed controversial views concerning with the practices of the CFGB, the majority of the interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality at the start of the interview. Therefore, the informants are only identified according to their roles that, in all hopes, that it will not compromise their position.

Though the findings were first and foremost obtained through the interview process, observational techniques significantly added to the story. Observation occurred through interacting with the organisational members and witnessing events as they unfold on site.²⁰⁵ Recurring, informal visits with CFGB staff, attendance at conferences, as well as travel opportunities contributed to the overall interpretation of the issues surrounding the case. Substantial opportunities for observation and informal discussions occurred, particularly during fieldwork in Kenya and Tanzania with the participating CFGB staff, partner organisations, constituents, and church agency field staff also played a significant role in understanding the work of the CFGB.

A further technique for generating data was through document analysis from internal and external sources. Secondary sources are naturally accompanied by varying perspectives and agendas. Arguably, the act of selecting a source is inherently biased, thus considerations over the validity of empirical data was present from the outset. Whenever possible academic sources were used, though a considerable portion of the information

was also drawn from newspaper articles (national, regional and international), government/ministerial publications, international agency reports, web articles and those originating from the NGDO itself were included. To be more specific, internal correspondences, board documents, as well as number of documents generated by key programme staff were analyzed, including memorandums developed by the funding organisation – CIDA. Recently an evaluation of the CFGB, commissioned by CIDA to an independent organisation, was undertaken. This document served as a complimentary guide in capturing the mission, management, implementation of programmes, organisational weaknesses and lessons learned in the last five years. Overall, the secondary sources served to supplement, add to and confirm or deny much of the information collected during the study.

The Appendix only includes a summary of the interviewees involved in the study. The recorded interviews were transcribed in full, however due to the sensitive nature of some interviews, no transcriptions have been included and informant's names have been left out.

The Stories from Canada

I began the process in Winnipeg, MB at the CFGB headquarters. I spent a month discovering the utmost about the organisation. The NGDO is divided into four main sections - Communications & Education, Policy, Programming, and Logistics. To get a deeper understanding of the organisational environment of the CFGB, the majority of staff members (with the exception of the secretarial staff) were interviewed. The office staff often receives interns, researchers or people from partner organisations on exchange so they were open and welcoming. Consequently, this environment enabled me to easily access different staff whenever to informally discuss issues pertaining to logistics, administration, human resources, education, programming and policy. As well as their high level of openness towards guests, the staff members were also at ease and experienced with the interview process. Many casual discussions also occurred throughout the period. The following year, informal consultations were also provided by CFGB staff from some of the sections, as well as the managing director.

The process of identifying the informants with social & economic links to the CFGB was straightforward, as the staff provided the necessary contact information for the government department, the member church agencies and the Agribusiness companies supporting their programmes. Identifying the most active NGDOs involved in hunger alleviation programming overseas was aided by staff at the CFGB, who provided me with the names and numbers of the NGDOs involved with international hunger issues through their network - the Food Security Policy Group (FSPG).

The research design included interviews with member churches. Each of the 13 churches (15 now) have their headquarters in different locations across the country, which resulted in only one face-to-face meeting in Canada with the MCC, which has its headquarters in Winnipeg, MB (though more staff from MCC, PWS&D and CRWRC were interviewed while on tour in Tanzania – see proceeding sub-section). Furthermore, an interview with the former president of the CFGB board, who had held office for the past two terms, provided added data on the role and perspectives of the board. More insight on the perspectives and operations of member church agencies was achieved through the CFGB staff. Besides working with the member churches, the staff is contractually required to be a constituent of one of the member church agencies and thus are intimately aware of the organisational, programming and policy issues surrounding many of the member churches.

Interviews with organisations involved in the FSPG, took place in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal where the various NGDOs have their head offices. The FSPG have roughly 15 member organisations, and interviews were conducted with 8 of these organisations, arguably the most active members of the group. Three more interviews took place with NGDOs that are not within the FSPG but involved in hunger alleviation. The organisations studied range in size from 4 to 30 staff members. In almost all cases, volunteer boards elected by the membership govern these NGDOs; these boards act as the primary policy-making bodies. Technical and administrative operations of these organisations are usually the responsibility of professional paid staff, supported by committees comprised mainly of volunteers. The primary task of these NGDOs is the creation and operation of international-level programmes, which contribute to the

sustainable development of the third world. The majority of these NGOs have developed a primary focus on long-term development programmes focused on securing the food supplies in a region and promoting advocacy, as a result of which they have less use for short-term food-based approaches such as the provision of food aid.

Government officials were the most difficult to reach and consequently there is less primary data from this group. Attempts at interviews with officials responsible for the food aid and biotechnology file at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the director of the Program Against Malnutrition, Hunger and Disease (PAHMDI), the branch of CIDA responsible for the CFGB file, led to dead ends. Instead, I met with the Canadian Resident Representative of the Food Aid Committee (the multilateral body of Northern countries that determine the minimum annual food aid commitments provided by donor countries). The meeting was especially peculiar, it took place in a busy food court where recording devices were of no use, and the informant was unable to answer most questions. However a different meeting with a former-government employee from PAHMD provided in-depth information on the government department, its operations and guiding principles, as well as the Government of Canada-sponsored NGO doing nutrition-based programming that focuses on micronutrients in development assistance.

The next set of data was collected from the private sector. Interviews were conducted with two of the five leading Agribusiness companies in Canada, that are also sponsors to the CFGB in the form of providing basic inputs (seed, pesticides, fertilizer) to the farmer-constituents for their growing projects. Two of the 5 Agribusiness companies have their headquarters in Winnipeg. The first company visited was Agricore, located in a high-security building in downtown Winnipeg. It was an interesting set-up, I was cautioned to wait on one floor while the national spokeswoman for Agricore met and escorted me to another floor. Monsanto Canada, also located in Winnipeg, this meeting was organised with a geneticist from Monsanto, however at the last moment I was informed that the spokesperson would be joining the meeting and it was to be held at a busy restaurant in the city centre, where recording devices were not possible.

Another occasion to collect data emerged during the second and third annual Food Security Assemblies in Winnipeg and Waterloo respectively. The assemblies are an attempt to bring the 'voices' of food security together to find solutions to eradicate local, national and international hunger. These opportunities provided a platform to observe the intermingling of, and presentations by, Canadian NGDOs, academics, activists, public health professionals, government departments, and multilateral agencies, each with different agendas and practices related to issues of hunger.

Throughout the entire process there have been opportunities for supplementary data collection. Through networking and chance, I have come into contact academics, environmental activists, the general public, and each are involved in areas related to the context of the study. Engagements have primarily been informal and in many cases, I have met with informants two and three times for follow-up discussions.

The Stories from Abroad

An additional set of data was collected during a field study in East Africa. Participation in the CFGB-led Food Study Tour to Kenya and Tanzania was an added bonus. The Tour was in its final planning phase when I arrived at the CFGB and was invited to join. Food study tours are designed to provide constituents with the opportunity to witness their 'funds in action' through visiting various programmes in recipient countries. The primary purpose of taking part in the tour was to gain first-hand knowledge in the overseas programming activities of the CFGB. The majority of the time was spent visiting projects, while also engaging with other tour participants, from farmers to engineers. There were nightly debriefings where tour participants and CFGB staff shared their ideas and perceptions about the programmes, as well as their own experiences with fundraising in Canada.

A rich body of information was also gathered from talking with field staff from the various member churches. Informal conversations with fieldworkers from four of the member churches took place. In most instances, data was collected through note taking and observation. The data was supplemented with a desk study of recipient nations views

on food aid and hunger alleviation. Further informal conversations occurred with local staff from two of the 'partner' grassroots or religious organisations at each project site.

The interviews included questions on the personal involvement of fieldworkers in hunger alleviation programmes according to the organisations they represent, and their view on the challenges surrounding programming. These interviews were extremely useful in gaining a more insightful understanding of the history of the different member churches initiatives and the point of view of the member in the field towards hunger alleviation.

Overall, the fieldwork process resulted in different sets of data from the different actors examined. However, it must be noted, that in addition to the many qualitative interviews, the daily contact at the CFGB office, the Food Study Tour, and the National Conferences, all together contributed to the understanding and interpretation of the story. The emphasis on the data collection is both through qualitative interviews in association with the experiences and observations made through the fieldwork period.

The sections of the data that are represented in the empirical chapters characterize the recurring themes and key points that surfaced during the fieldwork. The recurring use of quotations from particular informants throughout the empirical presentation reflects the eloquence in which they shared information and provided illustrative examples of the general characteristics or problems in the case.

Limitations in Data Collection

The data collection methods and the analysis process were influenced by general limitations. Funding limitations and a large geographical site made it difficult to travel between all the relevant Canadian cities, which resulted in dismissing certain actors from the study. In relation to the abovementioned contact challenges, federal civil servants were notoriously unavailable and those that were arranged interviews in stressful settings. As a consequence, the research design was refocused to include more of the NGOs from the sector in hopes of gaining a greater understanding of the GoC through different perspectives. Though the sample could have been more robust with a "first hand"

perspective of the GoC, secondary sources nonetheless provided meaningful supplementary data.

4.3 Interpretation & Analysis of the Data

In line with Pettigrew's perspective on processual case research, analyzing data is a manner of describing, analyzing and explaining the essence of a particular series of individual and collective actions.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, I referred to previous studies of organisational change from institutional and resource dependency perspectives. This strategy also compliments, the nature of organisational change in the ethnographic tradition of narrative description. In all, I conducted a detailed analysis of the CFGB in relation to the organisational field as well as its exchange relationships. The following is the rationale behind my decisions concerning data analysis.

The underlying notion is that social reality is not a constant condition; rather it unfolds in a continual and dynamic process of becoming. The first factor to consider is the search for patterns in the case, and a comparison of the form and frequency in which they appear.²⁰⁷ Another issue is the identification of underlying mechanisms that drive the processes patterning. In terms of NGDOs, these mechanisms can appear in many forms, such as an explicit part of an organisations mission, an employee deliberating pushing a particular objective, or an indirect aspect of the outlying NGDO sector. Thus the data was explored and classified to enable a greater understanding of the change process from the individual, organisational and sector-wide levels involving the CFGB.

The next factor concerns the identification of inductive patterns in connection with assumptions.²⁰⁸ This indicates that a researcher's background, values and belief system have the capacity to sway the aim and overall themes that emerge from the research. This is especially significant as this research is conducted according to an interpretative theory of organisational change that recognizes individuals as social actors who are in a continual process of creating their own social reality.²⁰⁹ Because this approach relies so closely on the researchers knowledge and experience in detecting patterns and locating themes, considerations over becoming too subjective in interpretation and analysis of data

were always present. As both the researcher and the informants have their own beliefs and views that play a role in influencing the outcome of the research, multiple sources were employed in order to reduce subjectivity. To further illustrate this point, if an NGDO programme officer describes a particular development programme as ‘ineffective and harmful’, this claim is not substantiated solely based on this single statement, rather it is confirmed only after cross-checking with other sources, such as other programme officers or secondary texts.

Another central issue concerning the interpretation of the data is the presentation. Only the best and most illustrative statements were included, unless the intention was to show the variety that exists. However, as a result of a number of thoughtful and concise interviews collected in the field, the limiting the quotations to include in the report was challenging. A choice was made to not only interpret the stories in the field, but also to share them, as much as possible, through their own voices. Consequently, much of the data is presented from the “voices in the field”, rather than paraphrasing their stories for interpretation. It is true that quotations in a report should not consist of more than half the text, however I do not believe this to be a concern.²¹⁰

On a final note, in processual research, the matter of time is based on relating the analyses to the outcome of the process.²¹¹ Subsequently, interviews were transcribed almost immediately after their completion, to enable a quicker process of familiarisation with the material, thus being prepared if and when more data surfaced.

To conclude the section on research design, the research method was not selected in order to underline the virtue of one method or to understate another. The choice was made based on relevance to the research topic. The findings of the research are the most important indicator of the usefulness of the selected method. Employing a case study that is both processual and exploratory has been useful in reaching a deeper understanding of the process of organisational change in the CFGB.

¹⁹⁶ Tvedt 2006

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Yin, *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

²⁰² Kvale 2004, p.129

²⁰³ *ibid.* p.131

²⁰⁴ Kvale, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁵ Yin, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁶ Pettigrew, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

²⁰⁹ DiMaggio & Powell 1991; Meyer J. and Rowan B. "Institutionalised Organisation: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," in *The New Institutionalism in Organisational Analysis*. (eds) W. Powell & P. DiMaggio. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1991) p.41-62.

²¹⁰ Kvale 2004

²¹¹ Pettigrew, *op.cit.*

CHAPTER 5 – Canadian Foodgrains Bank & NGOs Responding to Hunger

To deal with the complex issue of hunger alleviation by NGOs, this research seeks to analyze the development practices and guiding principles of a single Canadian NGO in light of its organisational field to unfold the complexities involved in the change process. This area is particularly relevant as there are no distinct rules addressing the pursuit of hunger eradication, and as the appropriateness of food aid programs is increasingly becoming a topic of discussion. The next four chapters are an attempt to develop an explanatory narrative of the variety of influences that have been affecting the CFGB in its organisational field. Through the stories based on the voices from the field, these chapters seek to provide a means to interpret the evolution of the CFGB and the strategies it has employed to ensure its survival and prosperity within the Canadian international aid system. This framework has been selected in order to better interpret how and why changes have taken place at the CFGB with the intention of addressing the research problem:

What explanatory narrative can be developed to convey the changing context of hunger alleviation programming at the CFGB, in response to, or in interaction with, the practices and policies of the Canadian international aid system?

One of the first steps in analyzing the organizational change processes that have taken place at the CFGB is in locating the dominant institutional forces impacting the NGO. Thus the empirical chapters largely tell the story of the deterministic aspects of the organisational field's influence on the CFGB. Though the NGO has many distinct features, it has sought consistency with the normative and regulative requirements of the field. Also, Oliver's strategies to deal with change are useful in that they provide the space for consideration, not only of the influences from the CFGB's environment, but also how the NGO manages the actors therein.²¹² It affords considerable importance to the interests, values and actions of both the manager of the CFGB, as well as the professional personnel, as major social actors of change. As DiMaggio and Powell have

suggested, organisations adopt the form in their environment that is most likely to provide them with the legitimacy they need for success.²¹³ This is consistent with this story of the CFGB. What follows is an interpretation the events surrounding the CFGB since its establishment.

5.1 Profiling the CFGB

“The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt.” F. Buechner

This section begins by situating the CFGB in the international aid system and continues with profiling the organisation according to its organisational structure and operations; this includes the NGOs mission, its personnel and operations. Thereafter, a presentation of the main issues surrounding the organisation, through to its operational practice of using food aid as a means to fight hunger, is presented.

The CFGB & the International Aid System

Broadly, the organisational field of the CFGB can be characterised as the international aid system in the Canadian context. It is an arena of power relations, with some actors possessing superior material and symbolic resources that influence the formal and informal structures of the CFGB. Largely, this is due to both a high degree of dependence between the CFGB and the actors involved in hunger alleviation, not to mention the uncertainty within the institutional environment of hunger alleviation itself. According to Scott, problems arise if an organisation is challenged by many institutional influences at the same time or from a variety of different sources.²¹⁴ Thus it will be demonstrated that the structural changes that have occurred at the CFGB are the result of the political, economic and cognitive elements in its environment that have taken place since its establishment.

Mission

The CFGB is a Christian-based NGDO that specializes in food aid. The organisation was first established by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in the late 1970s, and then incorporated in 1983, when other churches were invited by the MCC to join in the struggle against hunger. Since the early 1980s, the mandate of the organisation has been to support individuals from less industrialised countries that are suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The primary role of the CFGB is to provide assistance through free distributions of food following a natural disaster or conflict. The organisation has been steadily increasing the number of projects it funds, with the aim of reducing vulnerability to hunger and malnutrition. The CEO of the organisation explains about the origins of the guiding principles of the CFGB,

“Historically, there was a decision taken that, there was some value in taking food that was maybe, at the time there was a surplus, of food, at that point, on the Canadian prairies... it was sitting in bins, unused, unsellable, people were working in other parts of the world where there were food shortages, food was being brought inand there were serious food shortages, and saying, ‘what do we do, we got; we’re sitting on surplus, and we’re sitting on food shortages... There was also recognition that some of the way that international food aid was being done was inappropriate, was problematic, and so they said, ‘well, can we come up with some other ways of sharing food; is there a different model, a different way of doing it... Could there be a model for a more appropriate method for sharing food, but still based on, sort of, what people have. It has its deep roots in the scriptures, the notion of... taking a portion of one’s harvest, setting it aside for the poor, the dispossessed, the widow... the scriptures are filled with the notion ... you take the first fruits of your harvest and set those aside for others, not yourself ... So all those pieces came together to create this thing that is now called the Canadian Food Grains Bank, which is modelled on farmers sharing a portion of their harvest.” CEO, CFGBI

From its establishment and continuing today, the CFGB has been devoted to a food-based approach to fighting hunger.

Head Office & Personnel

At the headquarters in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the organisation is lead by an executive director and approximately 25 employees working within the areas of finance, policy, programming, logistics and communication/education. Recent increase in the organisational structure took the form of hiring two individuals in 2004 for the policy section, with educational backgrounds in international development studies and environmental science.

The CFGB is responsive to its Board of Directors that consists of two constituents from each of the member church agencies. The Board, along with the managers from the CFGB meet once a year for a comprehensive annual meeting, as well as other brief interactions during the interim. Besides working with the member churches, contractually CFGB staff must be a constituent of one of the 13 member churches and thus are aware of the programming, policy, and logistical issues surrounding many of the member church agencies.

Provincial coordinators, located in most Canadian provinces and commonly farmers that have been involved with prior Growing Projects, are employed by the CFGB to assist farmer-constituents with any concerns that arise prior to, during or after a Growing Project. These coordinators function as a direct link between the involved constituents and the organisation.

Operations

The CFGB manages a centralized food collection system, procurement and shipping, as well as providing advice and services to its member churches. It negotiates short and longer-term donor agreements with the federal government, agribusiness companies and the Canadian Wheat Board. The organisation has operations within Canada and overseas. Its national programmes are based on education the public on hunger education and a print and net-based communicaitons strategy. The overseas programmes offered by the NGDO are primarily food-based, though there are a minority in the area of nutrition and food security. Finally, a growing priority is their involvement in policy-related dialogue

on hunger-related issues at the federal and international levels. Below is a more detailed description of the CFGB programmes.

Hunger Education

The CFGB employs an education coordinator whose role is, in general, to teach Canadians more about the dynamics of hunger. One of the roles of the hunger coordinator is to produce lessons for middle and high school curriculum's. An educational programme with video's, information and exercises has been developed for high school teachers. However, the key responsibility of the Hunger Educator is to facilitate annual exchanges for constituents, both adult and youth, from the member churches to less industrialised countries. In these cases the coordinator leads a group of constituents on a tour to a less industrialised country(s), where students can visit some CFGB funded projects and experience a different setting. The third and most significant component is the Food study tours. They are designed to provide constituents with the opportunity to witness their "funds in action" through visiting various programmes in recipient countries. The primary purpose of taking part is to gain first-hand knowledge in the overseas programming activities of the CFGB and learn more about the problem of hunger.* The hunger coordinator explained that, during Food Study Tours, constituents engage in addressing the root causes of hunger, to develop an understanding of responding to hunger that is more than simply providing food. Topics such as dumping, trade issues, sustainable agriculture – those that are integral to transforming the current hunger situations – are discussed throughout the tours. The coordinator also expressed that these tours are essential in enabling constituents to address Canadian consumptive habits, foreign policy, and food policy to create more dialogue in the country. In general, the hunger coordinator leads two Food-Study Tours per year to various regions of the globe where the CFGB is programming.

Educational Communications

The CFGB has been providing educational and operational material to the public since its inception. However, recently it has been increasing communications to the public. Prior

* Information based on interview with CFGB education coordinator, see Appendix CFGB3

to 2002, information to the public was primarily in the form of an annual report, as well as a CFGB website. However, since the Summer 2002/2003, the CFGB has been publishing a biannual newsletter called *Update*, and released four editions before changing the name of the newsletter to *Breaking Bread*.[←] Each newsletter is a six-page update of the latest work of the CFGB; it generally begins with a piece by the executive director highlighting a feature related to hunger and the global environment; the four following pages are directed to Resources, Programming, Education and Food Justice respectively; and the final page provides information on how to donate to or learn more about the CFGB.

In 2004, the CFGB hired a new resources manager to do full review of resource generation, communications and hunger education activities. The CFGBs website has been re-constructed in anticipation that it will attract new supporters, improve communications with their current base to provide to a venue to keep constituents well informed and especially to learn about food justice issues and actions.[°] The new communications director also explained that her intention was that the website should serve as a more dynamic tool to begin to talk to supporters about untying food aid resources must take place.

Another recent addition to the communications strategy is the *Food Justice Update*, an occasional newsletter primarily focussing on the political environment of international trade talks at the World Trade Organisation. In general, the newsletter serves as a tool for sponsors interested in learning more about international trade negotiations and rules in the South. Discussions centre on explaining the reluctance of less industrialised countries to liberalize further, the position of the highly industrialised countries and what it means for global hunger. Some of the latest issues of the Food Justice Update have been special issues that covered the last WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong. They served as an attempt to communicate about the pertinent issues of surrounding the outcome of

[←] To check out all the newsletters, see http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/newsletters_and_mailings.aspx [January 4, 2008]

[°] Information based on informal discussion with CFGB program officer, see Appendix CFGB4

international trade talks and what the suspension of trade talks would imply, “if the developing countries had given into US and European pressure, the prospects for international trade helping reduce hunger and poverty would have been lost. But current unresolved trade problems also hurt the poor.”²¹⁵ The special issues also presented the matter of bilateral deals as well.

The some of the latest newsletters have included significant information on agriculture and the environment. The May 2006 issue highlighted the debate on Canada’s attempt to overthrow the moratorium on “Sterile Seed Technology”.²¹⁶ It was reported that CFGB supporters felt strongly that, “it is good that the Foodgrains Bank take up this issue – the links with hunger are clear; farmers should retain control of seeds, including the ability to replant then ... new technologies should always be assessed for their impact on the poor.”²¹⁷ This is a case where the farmers act as an asset, with their knowledge of the importance of saving seed. The proceeding issue introduced the link between climate change and hunger. “Most countries in Africa rely upon rain-fed agriculture, as we do in much of Canada. However, a broad swath of Africa across the north has low rainfall and these areas in particular are expected to see increasing droughts and the food crises that result ... many people will go hungry and some will die when the rains fail.”²¹⁸

Finally, the CFGB also releases an *Annual Report* that details the programmes and countries where funding has gone, resources used and the overall programming picture from the fiscal year. In the 2004 message from the managing director of the CFGB, he reflected on the issue that the millennium development goals would not be met.[†] The goal to halve the global number of hunger stricken people by 2015 is unreachable and the number of hungry around the world is continuing to increase. Heads of states have not demonstrated the political will necessary for change to occur, but the CFGB can contribute to this struggle through public policy work. Educating constituents on issues of hunger will assist in developing the consciousness needed to connect issues of poverty and hunger. The contributions of constituents are a strong way of influencing policy but

[†] For a copy of the latest annual report see: http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/annual_reports.aspx [January 4, 2008]

the CFGB wants to provide constituents with opportunities for a more direct impact on food justice work.

Overseas Programmes

Overseas programmes are at the heart of the CFGB operations. They receive the bulk of the resources and efforts of personnel. Structurally there are three programming officers and one programme director. The role of the programming officer is to assist members in preparing proposals and evaluating them. The organisation was without a director of programme services for nearly two years (2004-2006) and responsibility fell on the shoulders of the two well-experienced officers. In order to fill this spot and before hiring the director, a third Program officer was hired, the employee who previously managed logistics moved positions, leaving a gap within the logistics department.

The procedure is dependent on the local partner, who together with field staff from a member church agency or by themselves develops a proposal. This is a project plan involving the size and nature of the project that in turn is sent to their member in Canada. Thereafter, the proposal is received at the CFGB. Often before a proposal is submitted, the CFGB receives a concept paper, to explain what the partner would like to do, it is taken to the project review committee, comprised of staff from the CFGB including the managing director, for feedback and then is sent back to the partners for further development.* After that happens, a programming officer at the CFGB assesses the proposal, and if still necessary, the officer and the partner fine-tune the proposal to the point that it can be recommended for approval. A formal process takes place whereby a form is drawn up, mainly for budget purposes, and must be signed by the programming officer, the program director, and finally the managing director. After that, funding is released and the programming officer follows the project through implementation, evaluation and reporting.

Commonly, the CFGB carries out 80% of its operations in the form of rehabilitation programmes and 20% in development programmes. The CFGB needs a minimum of 3-

* Information based on interview with CFGB program officer, see Appendix CFGB4

months to respond to an emergency situation, as CIDA requires that it spend 90% (at the time of this study) of its budget on sending Canadian product overseas. This is why these programmes are called rehabilitation, rather than emergency. For example, during the massive flooding in India in 2004, the CFGB was unable to respond to the victims stranded on the embankments, because the majority of its budget was under the guarantee that it will be used in the purchase and shipment of Canadian products. So by and large, the CFGB has traditionally engaged in the rehabilitation end of an emergency situation, once people have already returned to their homes and discover that they have lost their crop, for example, and will not have access to food until they can plant the next harvest. In a case like this, they will need food for approximately eight months and the 3-month timeframe for shipping is manageable.

The remaining 10% of the operations budget is mostly used for responding to immediate disasters to purchase food locally or regionally. However, since 2006, a new grant agreement was signed with CIDA changing the requirement from 90% to 50% that must be sent from Canada. The change has made it possible for the CFGB to respond to more immediate disasters.

The development work that the CFGB carries out comes into play through longer-term development schemes that centre on the principle of food security. The CFGB staff stress that they are concerned not only with meeting the immediate needs, but also to see that longer-term food security develops, and although those tend to be a lesser amount of projects, they often do not involve providing food but rather new agricultural techniques, or training in areas of expertise so that a country will be able to train its own people.

Problems in Programming Food Aid?

The concern over food aid is a sensitive topic for the staff of the organisation. There are different views depending on the person you speak with. The staff is very familiar with the changing global context of fighting hunger and the role that food aid plays in that. In the following statement, the head of the policy section offers his perspective on the position of the CFGB within the context of the changing environment of hunger alleviation,

“..we have all these people doing growing projects and we have all these people growing food, and it was something that made a lot of intuitive sense 20 years ago. The world’s changed and I think that the whole of North America society is in denial about how much the world’s changed, it has changed such that NEPAD countries are talking about setting up their own food security system, food reserve system in Africa so that if there’s a food shortage they can drawn on African food in order to meet the need. Well it’s hard to know if there really going to be able to put legs under that. But the reason they’re saying that is that they’ve reached the point of saying is that we simply don’t want to be taking food aid from all over the world or we don’t want to be taking food aid specifically from certain western or northern countries. So that’s an interesting push back all of a sudden for African leaders to be saying that and that has a lot of resonance in African civil society, so there’s a whole story out there where people are saying well we have a problem of hunger but we’re less and less seeing northern food aid as the solution to that. Along with that you have those who are more in the IFI camp, WB and IMP, saying we need to focus our attention on the poverty reduction strategy and internal solutions that are more and more relying on transformations in those countries and less and less a question on whether we’re at 0.7% of GNP for our aid. And these are major issues, in terms of investigating, so what does that mean when you’ve got a population back here who are motivated with really good intentions, trying to act into a world that is changing so rapidly.” Head of Policy Section, CFG2

Furthermore, there is awareness in the organisation that they are positioned outside the view of the majority of the sector when it comes to pursuing this form of development strategy. In the next passage, the CEO attempts to explain the difficult position of the NDGO in relation to the NGDO sector,

“...there are big debates out there..real tensions. Tensions within civil society over these issues, disagreements as to, you know, there are certain groups of people.. Where I have a problem, is they.. Yes they are members of civil society,

but they claim to speak on behalf of all civil society, which is problematic because they're a voice within civil society but there are many voices out there, and varieties of contending, differing, contested.. views. The challenge is, where do we operate, what space do we operate with, in all these different cacophony of voices, given that the nature of our organisation draws a very broad cross-section... of the Church, of society, of perspectives, of views, and.. Held together by some core values, and those core values being, that hunger is not acceptable, and that we have some responsibility to do something about it. What we should do, exactly, what are all the solutions, now, those become the debates of strategy, all right, and those legitimate debates, differences of viewpoint. I mean we have them in the office, we have very different perspectives, and we have some interesting debates and views, and not everybody shares the same perspective on these issues. And I don't have a problem with it. I think that's healthy debate. Healthy contending of issues, and then you push people to say ok, and people need to come up with some perspectives, how they're going to move forward, on the basis of what is it, and what are the assumptions they're basing it on, what's the empirical data they're basing it on, what's the historical analysis. And how easy it is to move forward." CEO, CFGBI

One of the main points being raised by the CEO's is that the NGDO sector, in their disregard for food aid, does not necessarily represent the views of the greater sphere. Rather, he states the provision of food aid is according to the underpinnings of the member churches and their constituencies as the driving force. Their philosophy can be understood according to the scriptures: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in" in Mathew 25:35-36. However, it was also apparent that he recognises and welcomes the fact that perspectives are changing and that there is a growing dialogue among the members, as well as the personnel at the CFGB.

As previously implied, the personnel also have varied perspectives on the overall operations of the organisation. Some personnel were very interested in re-examining the organisations underlying mission apropos food aid, while others approached this topic

with utmost caution. In a discussion with the head of the policy section he had this to say about scrutinizing why food aid continues to be a development priority in Canada,

“..well the food aid is so small, I mean it’s a \$100 million in a \$3billion aid programme – it’s tiny. That’s why I said it not a lot of water to float a PhD in. You can talk to the people who know anything about it pretty quickly, it might be a masters thesis but I doubt it’s a doctoral thesis, just because there isn’t enough there.” Head of Policy Section, CFGB2

Other CFGB personnel expressed that the organisational priority of supplying food aid should be re-visited and discussed. Their perspective was more radical in that it centres on the concern that the CFGB’s response must concentrate on the injustices of hunger. They recognised that it could require a shift from food aid to public policy and education. The personnel communicated that resources for agriculture extension and supporting small farmers are also important for ending hunger. But above all, what was expressed was that the CFGB needs to focus more on the structural causes of hunger in relation to the question of access, and less about knowledge transfers. In the next statement by the education coordinator at the CFGB, he implies that the way forward goes beyond empowerment approaches to centre on the global structural inequalities between industrialised and less industrialised nations,

“We need to work more at this situation. We don’t need to empower the South; we need to unlock power that is already there. It implies that we have the power to give, this power already exists, [but] the space for negotiation doesn’t and we need to release it.” Education Coordinator, CFGB3

The personnel at the CFGB come from varied perspectives on how to fight hunger, from the charity approach of food aid, to having a role in empowering vulnerable persons, to advocating on the world stage. There is a lot of knowledge and experience within the organisation and the possibilities just need to be tapped into.

The varied perspectives on food aid are largely a consequence of the practice of shipping food from Canada. This debate unfolds in different directions; however, by and large it focuses on the timeliness and appropriateness of sending aid versus

“... there are a lot of issues around food aid, big issues.. GMO is such a minor and gentle, in some sense emotive, but largely in my view .. sort of.. Versus how significant big food aid issues are substantive issues around food aid, with GMOs being only a very minor sub-point of these bigger issues.”
CEO, CFGB1

purchasing it locally. In connection with both of the aforementioned issues, is the debate on the proliferation of GMOs through food aid. In terms of the current funding structure, the CFGB's hands are tied when it comes to shipping GMOs, as the CIDA agreement required that 50% to be shipped from Canada. This is a problem, since all Canadian food shipments contain traces of GMOs.

There are mixed feelings at the CFGB with regard to their responsibility around this issue. The mandate of the organisation is to be responsive to the needs of their Partner organisations, so when proposals come that are explicit about not wanting any GM-content, the CFGB must reject the project unless they have funds enough to make a local purchase. In this quote the CEO is minimizes the concern over GMOs by implying that it is a global phenomenon, not a product being imposed from North America,

“Let’s take Africa ... during the drought [in 2002], if we looked at buying, you know... clearly you weren’t going to buy in the countries affected by the drought, I mean there was a need to bring food in from outside, there was insufficient production in those countries to meet consumption demands. Normally where you would go to, is with the largest producer, by far the largest producer of grain is southern Africa. Well South Africa is going down the GMO route big time, China is going down that route big time, Brazil is going down that road.. So pretty soon, it doesn’t matter whether you’re talking about Canadian or American [food], if you’re talking about the purchase of surplus supplies of certain commodities on the international market, just because you’re not supplying from Canada it’s not going to mean that you’re - you’re not going to get the visual ... it’s in fact, it’s going to become - South Africa would be a big – that would be one of the places you would turn to frequently for surplus

supply... and they've made the decision that they're going to - they're already growing GMO corns - various GMO products in South Africa, and they're going down that road." CEO, CFGBI

Subsequently, the perspective of the CEO is that the GM debate has already taken place and the verdict is that GMOs are a reality, that even less industrialised nations have come to terms with. Thus, it was implied that this is not an important issue affecting the CFGB. The head of the policy section reinforces this perspective in the following comment, which downplays the importance of addressing this issue in Canada,

"...the issue of GM food aid if you really wanted to pursue that you should be in Washington, because it's a much hotter issue there, its much more clearly linked to the business community, if that's your particular issue, that's where you want to go. Because you've got organisations like CARE which is a strong member of the food aid coalition, which is a very strident and very well funded lobby organisation for the big NGOs that receive 10s of millions of dollars from USAID in the form of food and they're really caught in a bind and now CARE which is one of them, is starting to break out, some of the CARE staff is starting to say, you know this is such a rotten business that we're in, we want out and Dan Maxwell, who's the co-author of this book 'Food Aid after 50 Years'is making a really strong analysis of food aid, its links to agribusiness, a bit around GMs, but more the whole question of American food aid, which is 60% of global food aid, is being driven by the iron triangle made up of the big NGOs, the shipping companies and the big grain traders and that these are the only three sort of interest groups that really benefit from this huge food aid programme now and depended very strongly, but that's not a story that's here [CAN], that's a story that's down there [US]. My analysis would be that if you want to do GM and the commercial links that's what the story is, which you might be able to do from any place like here, but that's going to be the nexus of the information ... its almost never an issue for us and the reason being that we don't provide Soya beans very often, it's a tiny commodity, we generally don't provide maize because its difficult to ship and we have a lot of problems with the

rotting of maize – nothing to do with it being GM - everything to do with it being maize shipped from Canada. So it leaves here cold, passes through the tropics, picks up humidity and it rots. And that’s been a huge problem for us. So therefore we tend not to ship maize. There was one notable exception in the past ten years that I can think of was the big shipment we did to south Africa, where we were fully cognisant that there may be a GM issue, we looked at it, and we have to make sure this stuff is milled because all the evidence we can find, the biggest concern was release into the environment, so if its milled it can’t be planted, but I mean that was one big shipment in ten, so its not much to make a story about.” Head of Policy Section, CFGB2

The argument over the insignificance of the CFGB’s role in the proliferation of GMOs is premised on the point that the organisation ships very little maize overseas and that the other GMO products are not considered a health issue. In the following conversation, the CEO shakily describes the CFGB’s shipments and how they relate to the GMO question,

CEO: “On the GMO issue it relates to one product only – corn. That’s the only issue.”

Q: Because soy and canola are processed?

CEO: “Yeah, they’re processed. And in the processing they’re not even a health issue. Because in the process..the, the, the GMO pieces are actually extracted from within the thing [commodity] so it’s not really even a health issue, and certainly not an environmental issue when it comes to canola and soy. So there’s no one raising big issues on the health stuff on canola and soy. So the only product at this point that gets shipped, that’s food aid [and] that’s a GMO product, is corn. And that represents a miniscule overall. If I was to look over the last five years of our shipping; it maybe represents less than 5% of our overall food aid provided. You would have had one year where we....

(logistics officer enters room & CEO asks logistics officer) “In the last 5 years total food shipments from Canada, how much would corn represent?”

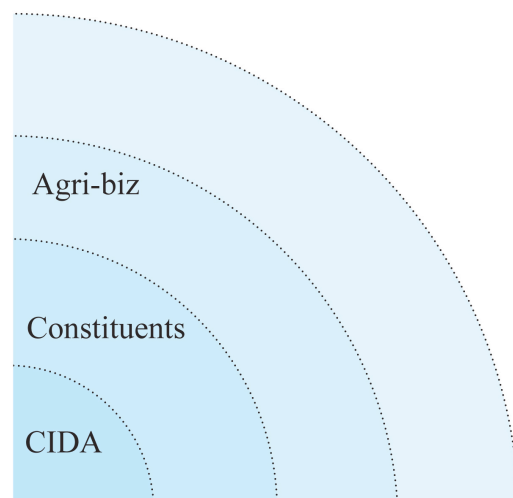
logistics officer: Well with the exception of 2002 [drought], which really would distort our numbers with 15,000tons, we would normally not ship more than probably 1,000tons a year. Then 2002 just [circling finger movement] 15,000 in one go. Since then I bet we haven't shipped more than 500tons a year, it's something we don't do a lot of ... It just depends what area of the world you're programming in." CEO, CFGBI

By making light of the GM issue, in highlighting that it is only an issue concerning one commodity and one that is not widely programmed, he provides a clear picture of the lack of considerations that go into this issue in relation to programming. Changes in the CIDA funding agreement will lessen the impact of the GMO issue by freeing up more funds for making local purchases in many cases, however the problem still exists. Though, in general, the CFGB has not had incessant situations of programming maize, this does not mean that it could not happen, in light of the growing climatic problems, recurring droughts and flooding around the globe.

Resources

The CFGB gathers resources from a variety of actors. As can be seen by the following illustration, there are three key groups – the GoC, the member churches constituent base, and Agribusiness industry. The closer the position of the group to the CFGB, the higher the amount of resources it contributes.

Organisational influence according to ressource relations



CFGB

Figure 5.

The role of the CFGB begins by facilitating Growing Projects within Canada that lead to donations of agricultural commodities, which are sold and their funds used for CFGB programmes. To date, donations to the CFGB have resulted in almost 950,000 metric tons of food provided to 68 countries around the world.²¹⁹

Members make use of the donated funds to implement emergency or development projects with partner organisations that work all over the globe, especially hunger-prone regions. The partners are religious-based, community-based, grassroots, and non-governmental groups. In some circumstances the implementing agencies can be host governments or international agencies, such as United Nations agencies. Members team with partner agencies (from now on known as ‘partners’) or locate their field staff in country to facilitate hunger-related programmes. Most partnerships are based on previously formed relationships from earlier project collaborations.

Table I. Grain and Cash Donations – Four Year Summary, in millions \$

	Grain	Donor Cash	Land	Member Transfers	Total
2003/2004	\$3.63	\$3.03		\$0.67	\$7.33
2002/2003	\$3.27	\$3.15		\$1.73	\$8.11
2001/2002	\$2.92	\$2.79		\$0.42	\$6.14
2000/2001	\$2.93	\$2.53	\$0.13	\$0.34	\$5.93
4-Year Average	3.19	\$2.88	N/A	\$0.79	\$6.88

Canadian Foodgrains Resource Department Report 2004

The CFGB has a great deal of institutional, as well as organisational, influences exerted upon it simultaneously. Whether you look at the relations with its donors, or the principles in which it attempts to adhere to – the organisation is consistently under great pressure. By understanding the dynamics of the relationships to the various organisational actors, it is possible to gain a thorough understanding of the pressures the CFGB is facing and the operational decisions it has chosen. The objective of the next chapters is to

describe both the resource relationships between each of the organisational actors and the CFGB, where they exist, as well as uncovering the impact these actors have on the priorities of the organisation. The following chapters tell more of the story of the CFGB and the changes that have transpired in the organisation in relation to their organisational environment.

Introducing the Canadian NGDO Sector

The CFGB is a vital part of the Canadian NGDO sector involved in fighting hunger. The relationship it has with other NGDOs in the sector plays a large influencing role on the CFGB. Fundamentally, the relationship between all NGDOs in the sector is built on a shared desire to improve the livelihoods in less industrialised nations. In Canada, the last decade has, in particular, seen the development of key national events and the formation of networks that focus on approaching hunger from the contemporary understanding, that food security in the form of capacity building projects, as well as advocating for the rights of marginalised persons, is the way to cope with hunger.

Subsequently, this section begins with a description of the NGDO sector involved in hunger alleviation and the social and regulative institutional environment surrounding it. The intention is two-fold: 1) it seeks to describe the institutional environment surrounding this sector of Canadian NDGOs in general, and 2) shed light on the impact that Canadian NDGOs have on the CFGB, due to their different perspectives on hunger.

5.2 The Canadian NGDO Sector

Canadian NGDOs are struggling with a variety of elements. From issues regarding positive relations between the GoC, to questions over maintaining stable funding arrangements, to issues of personality between and among organisations. Canadian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have played a key role in channelling food aid, Canadian and otherwise, overseas; with unofficial estimates place the net value from 30% - 50% of the total aid provided.²²⁰ In many cases, Canadian NGDOs have had more

opportunity to carry out projects than many governments in low-income countries.³ Consequently, the relationship between the NGDO sector and those involved at all levels of their programming is essential. NGDOs are in the complex position where they are responsive and dependent upon donors, while also being accountable to their implementing partners, and the recipients of their programmes.

Affecting both international development policies, as well as national policies that relate to hunger issues, have many political determinants that reside outside of the traditional means employed by this sector of NGDOs. A social scientist from the Centre on for Studies in Food Security in Toronto sums up the current situation of NGDOs in their struggle to affect change in government policy,

“The interesting thing I find with civil society these days is that they’re kind of paralyzed, they work in a constraining environment, which constantly puts up road blocks, to whatever creativity they might be presenting to the system. And some [government officials] are looking for external avenues for their ideas because they can’t get them internally, so if they develop some confidence that you have integrity and you have a mutual agenda, as an external person you’ll bring them information that they can use to advance their thing and internally they’ll give you information, then that’s the ideal scenario. A lot of the time none of this is explicitly stated - it’s a bit like dating. If you can get it to work, it works well often, [but] unless you’ve got an official invitation to do this, it’s by serendipity.” Social Scientist in Food Security1

While the government may have the intention of extending the international development profile by working together with NDGOs, the current structure has not permitted itself from truly engaging with NGDOs in that process, as was illustrated in the former commentary. If a NGDO is successful in forging a relationship with a government official it can create a reciprocal rapport. In order for any trans-organisational relationship to be effective a high degree of trust or legitimacy is integral, this is

³ Interview, NGDO1

especially the case between an NGDO and their primary funder. The following statements from officers from different NGDOs speak to the ambiguousness of the relationships between NGDOs and the government,

“It varies so much from one project to the other, it totally depends on the personality [of the CIDA agent] and the values of the person that’s assigned to your project.” Program officer, NGDO4

“They love us, well to say that it’s a bit glib. We just had as the end of our 5-year programme, CIDA hired two external evaluators to evaluate us, that’s part of the process of applying for another 5 years, and our external evaluation was extremely positive on every count. They respect us, they like working with us, they’ve said that they would like to do a gender case studies of the work that we do, because we’re a feminist organisation we don’t work with women in projects, they’re part of everything we do, that we should have management case studies done because the way we manage ourselves is so effective and people don’t know this kind of model, and through the evaluation it was demonstrated that there is extremely high financial oversight, and really good relationships.” Program officer, NGDO1

The consistent message provided by NGDOs, is that the reliability of funding arrangement and communications between NGDOs and the GoC are dependent upon the character of the bureaucrat that has been assigned to the file. This scenario makes for an insecure state of affairs in the NGDO organisational field.

Personality is an institutional element not only affecting relations between NGDOs and the government but also between the NGDOs themselves. Besides the external forces influencing the NGDO environment, the types of people involved with Canadian NGDOs, also play a significant role.

“...we draw people who are by nature oppositional, a lot of folks psychologically are not disposed to being collaborative, except with the people

who think the same way they think, so we lose a lot of momentum in civil society because we're fighting unnecessarily with each other, a lot of it is wrapped up in the individual psychology of each person and why they're attracted to the so-called alternative movement - its a place where you can walk on the wild side and be a frontiers person. You find that in organic agriculture particularly, you find all these people that are brilliant in what they do but you can't get them to work together, you can't even run a meeting. Very few have broader organisational skills that can advance a sector, it's totally distressing ... civil society isn't generally that concerned about effectiveness, we're more concerned about doing what we enjoy doing. So what happens is that its much more sexy to be doing the bigger political stuff, like when you do the bureaucratic stuff, admittedly often it is incredibly tedious stuff, reading through all these regulatory directives is boring as shit and has no public visibility in it, often you have to be invisible to get it done. And people in civil society aren't doing this to be invisible, they're in the game to be visible, do the media work, talk to the parliamentarians." Social Scientist in Food Security1

This statement speaks to the very nature of agents engaged in issues of social justice and the environment, that they are arguably more prone to conflict, which adds another element of constraint. Moreover, this dynamic is amplified in cases where a NGDO has not been able to build relations with a government representative, thus making it increasingly difficult to manoeuvre in the organisational environment. A programme officer from a NGDO provides a perspective, in which the government interacts with the sector,

"They're intentionally inaccessible ... I think the working hypothesis of most of the governments is that at best they want to be seen to have consulted Canadian civil society, not authentically consulting, certainly not being beholden to anything coming from these consultations. In fact, I think Canada, I heard, has recently got in trouble with the DAC [Development Assistance Committee] for listening too closely to civil society, around various issues. So there's a backing away certainly around corporate globalisation, everything's opaque, difficult to

access, that's sort of by design, you need to know somebody ... What you're really dealing with is why is there not more traction with the area of ODA and tied aid and this issue of accessibility of bureaucrats and Canadian government being responsive to its citizenry. Well lobbyists are part of its citizenry, I guess, but those are the people, everything else being equal, that get listened to not civil society." Program officer, NGDO10

Subsequently, NGDOs that want to be effective in lobbying the government must be aware of the sources of influence within the system if they want to successfully manoeuvre. Frustration was expressed throughout the sector over the lack of movement at the government levels; this notion was also reiterated in an interview with a social scientist working on food security issues,

"Civil society seems to think, well if we actually present a rationale case, we give the broad strokes of a rationale case and apply the pressure in the right places - then we'll get a response. That used to be true in many cases, but on a lot of files of course there isn't a lot of political leverage, and there is actually no political landscape where decisions are made, its all made at a bureaucratic level. So if you can't manoeuvre the bureaucratic landscape, if you don't understand the bureaucratic forces and these kind of questions - I'm talking about the lines of authority between line departments and the central agencies - then you can't actually figure out why the heck we're not making any progress on changing anything ... One of the challenges that I'm finding for civil society these days, is that we haven't really adjusted to the new political-bureaucratic reality. A lot of civil society is still focusing on the parliamentary level, but basically a lot of the files we're trying to move are not on that level, it has no interplay with them anymore. So basically if we're going to be effective we're going to a) have to learn how to use the bureaucratic world and b) then use the parliamentarians in a different way to put pressure on the bureaucracy rather than think that they are the direct avenue for affecting change, because in most agricultural cases they're not. Like when do Ag-bills go to parliament, there's hardly anything." Social Scientist in Food Security1

Another key difficulty affecting NGDOs is their disability in recognizing the avenues with the most influence. For NGDOs to be more effective, especially on the issue of promoting long-term food security, it has been suggested that they should focus less on the parliamentarians and more on the bureaucrats in order to affect change. An informant from a NGDO that works largely with policy issues had this to say about how NGDOs make an impact,

“..people have to resonate with something, so you’ve got to find an angle. So some of these things can be manufactured, some sort of public event, demonstration ... that someone may be sympathetic, so that you can get in the door, know somebody who knows somebody, a letter to the editor, something to get it into the public domain ... sometimes building enough pressure from the outside and government has to respond or finding the right opposition critics and getting some material into their hands, and there are sympathetic bureaucrats.” Program officer, NGDO10

While recognizing the channels of influence within government is an important aspect of mobilising support, NGDOs also employ other equally significant measures to advance their development agenda. Although these organisations may be less effective at directly manoeuvring around government officials, they effect change through exchanges with the public, the media and the bureaucracy.

Government Funding to NGDOs

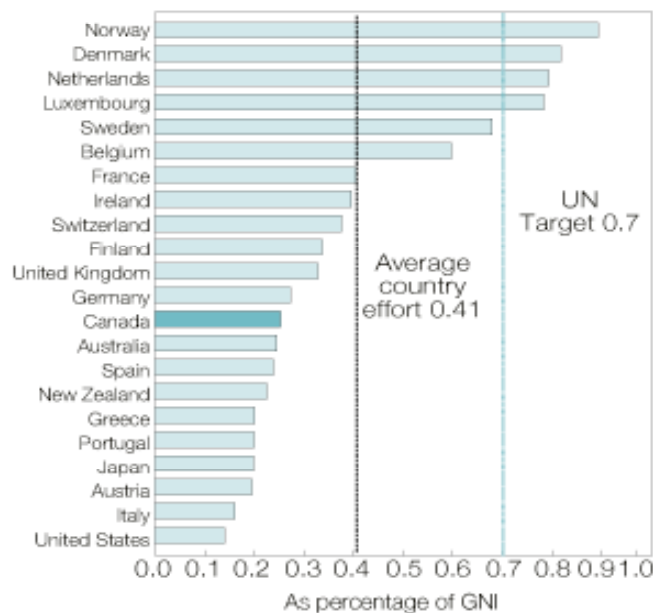
Canada is a main global food exporter and donor. As a result, there are many different organisations doing international programming to eliminate hunger that are based in Canada. There are approximately 15 Canadian-based NGDOs carrying out a variety of hunger-related projects; while OXFAM, World Vision and CARE, some of the main global NGDOs, also have Canadian offices; and lastly, United Nations agencies such as the World Food Program, the Food and Agricultural Organisation and UNICEF also have a presence in which they receive Canadian funds and move commodities. As a result of

the plethora of organisations located within, or having affiliation to Canada, competition over funds is high.

The vast majority of funding for NGOs comes from the Government of Canada (GoC). In 1970, the United Nations set the standard that 0.7% of the gross national income from industrialised nations should go towards their international aid budget. However, Canada's ODA commitments have consistently been low, peaking at the maximum of

Figure 6.

Net Official Development Assistance as a Percentage of Gross National Income, 2003



Source: OECD, 2004.

0.53% in 1975-76.²²¹ By the mid-90s, along with other reductions to Canada's Official Development Assistance, food aid fell by over 50% to Cdn\$260 million, and has remained in that vicinity ever since.²²² For example, in the fiscal year 2003-2004, the total Canadian ODA was Cdn\$3.1 billion, which equates to 0.26% of their ODA commitment. On that amount, the federal government allocated Cdn\$16.6 million to NGOs

for the purpose of providing emergency food relief.²²³ It can be argued that this contribution is substantial in light of the continually diminished ODA commitments from the Government of Canada (GoC).

Not only is there increased competition, but

“The traditional outlook on ODA is that it’s much larger than in reality it is, when you poll people on the street they say - we’re giving 5%. Well its way below the 0.7% of GDP that everyone agreed to 20 years ago, and its only coming up a little now.”
program officer, NGO10

also as a result of the unstable ODA budget, NGDOs are not guaranteed to maintain their current funding levels and have been strongly encouraged to seek other funding sources.

“..in fact if you look at inflation, from CIDA, the bilateral funding is project dependent so if you look at that it often increases. But our institutional funding stayed the same for 10 years and then this year we asked for an increase, and we’re not going to get it, they said they’d like to give us an increase but they can’t afford it. So in fact if you look at inflation, our institutional funding has been declining from CIDA.” Program officer, NGDOI

One of the key implications associated with CIDA being the major funder of Canadian NGDOs is the issue of control over the development agenda. This translates into challenges over the types of development programs, in which NGDOs can attract funds. It also plays a role in the NGDOs ability to play the role of ‘watchdog’, and have the ability to criticise the GoC in areas where it is not fulfilling its mandate or has a responsibility to act. A development officer describes the double-sided edge confronting Canadian NGDOs,

“Maybe one of the ill-effects of aid effectiveness...is that parts of ODA through Canadian NGDOs strengthens civil society’s ability to monitor human rights abuses and economic injustice in places like Africa, [but it] is vulnerable to being cutback. So that makes the whole package of ODA worse than it might have been before. When at least some of the ill effects of Canada’s support for International Financial Institutions, for example pushing SAPs [structural adjustment programs] that have pernicious effects on the poor, they could be at least called to account by civil society groups supported through Canadian NGDOs. Now if that’s eliminated, or the Canadian NGDOs capacity to do that is cutback, then this aid effectiveness is in fact aid ineffectiveness, then this is really regressive. So there’s some cautionary notes in reading what the Canadian government is really putting out there, to the extent that it doesn’t emerge from an authentic dialogue with civil society - the people who are really

underpaid and overworked in terms of monitoring good governance on the part of ODA.” Program officer, NGDO10

Besides the aforementioned terms of engagement between NGDOs and CIDA, NGDOs are also limited according to the countries they can service. The following is one NGDOs’ description of the impact that CIDA has had on their development efforts and the alternative routes that some organisations take as a response,

So the only way that CIDA ever comments on our general direction is more specific, for example, Thailand graduated as an ODA-able country that can qualify for funding, so CIDA can no longer fund through us, groups that are working in Thailand, so that kind of geographic overseas stuff can kind of shift, we’ve been warned that Mexico may become non-ODA-able. So for now Thailand and Malaysia are off the list and we support work in Thailand and Malaysia, so what we have to do is support with our own funds which we raise through our own foundations and supporters so it becomes more complicated to track but it doesn’t affect our work because we know that we need to constantly seek to increase our funding from non-CIDA sources and that’s the complete driving thing behind all of our fundraising work we do, the more funding we have that’s not from CIDA the more independence we have and the more flexibility we have and we fully realise that and at the moment its not constraining our activity we have the funds to support that, but the more these things get super tight the more tricky these things become for us, so we try to support civil society efforts to not have that become more constrained at CIDA that there’s more flexible interpretation of things like results which countries are ODA-able. Like there’s this under current that CIDA should restrict the amount of countries it works in, that would affect us hugely, if they cut half the countries we worked in, we might not be able to continue the funding everywhere.” Program officer, NGDOI

In the next excerpt, an NGDO officer blatantly explains that as a consequence of CIDA being their primary donor, in order to ensure the organisations survival, they must

conform, by and large, to the agency's demands though it may be outside their range of interests.

“We have two kinds of programmes, [and] we have our projects. With some of them we submit a proposal to execute a project that was designed, the structure of it was designed by CIDA, and that's, I would say, most of what we do. We don't really like to do it, but you know you have to survive, and to some extent I think our successes will be taken into account, and then often will translate into the programming of CIDA. But then there's this whole other category of projects where we submit something without being asked because there is money for that purpose as well, and in those projects we are just so free, we can think of the objectives ourselves, and the structure and how it's going to be made and it just reflects more our values and experience. We're hoping to do more and more of those projects but it just really depends on CIDA. How much money they have for those kind of projects; and we're trying to diversify our funders....CIDA is our major funder. We have a lot of paper work. It depends what programme - Program Appui Institutionelle, (Institutional Support Programme) where the guidelines are defined in the agreement we have with CIDA, but within that we can choose who we assist, and what we're going to do, smaller amounts of money that we will give in each intervention. That's the programme that allows us to do things like exchanges, internships on farmer, to discover how the agriculture milieu is structured.” Program officer, NGDO4

Although NGDOs are restricted in many ways, within the CIDA agreements there are parameters that can be stretched to allow for a limited degree of programming autonomy on the part of the NGDO. In addition to controls over programming, a further requirement that NGDOs must endure is the higher degree of CIDA administrative controls over their programming,

“'NGDO2' is put through [a lot] on accountability terms, for the 6 million [dollars] from CIDA compared to what a multilateral is put through like UNICEF for their 300 million. We do 10 times the paper work on the front end

easily. A 10% change in one of our project budgets - and we've been under CIDA funding for 15 years - and we still get nickled and dimed on anything that's happening in our programmes, and the multilaterals nothing, it's significantly less." Program officer, NGDO2

"We have guaranteed, well they can stop at any time, well it's largely guaranteed funding within 5-year blocks [for multilateral programmes], and every year we have to submit a report, a very detailed narrative report and financial reports we're doing all the time. And then when we reapply for 5-year funding, it's a very long process, you have to develop a framework; you have to go to negotiations. And then for the bilaterals' [programmes], there's more bureaucratic requirements, they have to do quarterly financial reports, some of them quarterly narrative reports, some of them biannual narrative reports - all of those require RBM [results-based management]." Program officer, NGDO1

The issue that CIDA agreements are non-binding has implications in itself, however that Canada-based NGDOs have more administrative requirements, as compared to the requirements of multilateral organisations, serves to increase the administrative workload and lessen the time spent on programme development in organisations that already have lower capacity financially and in terms of man-power, than their multilateral associates.

Another factor affecting the NGDO sector today is the difficulty in attracting CIDA funds as compared to multilateral organisations. In the 1980s, CIDA was one of the first federal agencies in the world to shift a lion's share of its funding to the NGDO sector, however in the past 10 years, during which time other donor countries have followed their lead, CIDA has, once again, begun to shift in another direction.

"It's [CIDA is] so different from some of the European agencies, that's the impression that I'm getting. In Bangladesh, the Brits have totally decentralized their entire aid allocation, which is a lot, 20 million pounds, to an agency. They put up for bid, 'who wants to run our aid in Bangladesh' and CARE Bangladesh won the bid, and the office has it's own website and it is the delivery of 20

million pounds over 5 years, and local agencies submit proposals on a lot of human rights, civil society development and good governance, that's what the Brits wanted to put money towards, so they decentralized, the money is in Bangladesh, and they approach it like that. Whereas what we're seeing in Canada - give the money to the bilaterals and let them deal with it. And CIDA is starting to only want to deal with really big things, don't even talk to them unless its 10 million dollars, because they don't want to deal with the administrative hassles, the bigger the better or leave us alone. So we have a really hard time with some of our best programmes, that CIDA will go on and on about, they are all over their website, the Ministers talking about, and they give us big hassles, there's \$45,000 for you, there only 70,000 girls in Bangladesh come on! .., CIDA is taking a very different tactic than some of the European agencies, and I think Scandinavians as well, and the CBDC (the Community Biodiversity Development Centre/Coalition) it's a big pool of money to support community initiatives and they can be quite small, and the IDRC puts money in, the Danish, they Swedes, feed into it, proposals come in it once every four years, and they've pooled it all to get the money out there. And CIDA's taking a very different tactic, and becoming quite business like about the delivery of the aid budget ... CIDA just hands it over to WFP or UNICEF, take our commodities but we're not going to move it around for you much anymore."

Program officer, NGDO2

Multilateral agencies have far less reporting requirements than the NDGOs and are receiving much larger amounts of resources from CIDA. The added restraints placed on the NGDO sector can be interpreted as a method to deter the sector from seeking additional government resources, as well as a general in effectiveness or unwillingness of the government to work with the sector.

Sector-wide Responses to Hunger

There is huge diversity within the NGDO sector when it comes to programmes to battle hunger. A minority of the organisations focus on advocacy, while the majority are involved in service delivery. The services range from radio programs to assist farmers, to

developing farmer associations, to digging dams. The overarching theme is rural agricultural development and capacity building. The following are excerpts where NGDOs describe the type of programming they are involved with.

“..You have to develop the democratic life of the organisation and have people participate, it’s an art to get organised like that. So that’s part of the expertise we’re sharing with partners mostly in West Africa. Supply management is an example where you have to get the State involved as well you need to provide the regulations that allows that, there are also other tools, at least collective marketing, where instead of each farmer going to see the salesman individually, if you go together you can get a better price. So these are the kind of strategies we’re helping farmer groups in West Africa implement...Our conception of food security is really through increasing the revenues of farmers because the countries that we’re working with have farmers, in the countryside, and most poor are in countryside, and if you want to impact food security it’s really to get the farmers to earn a descent revenue for what they grow. So that’s our approach to food security.” Program officer, NGDO4

“In this program we are trying to shed light give advice, affecting by doing these things, the fundamentals of food security - genetic resources, clandestine knowledge and traditional knowledge in practice, particularly in the marginalised areas.” Program officer, NGDO2a

The CFGB is the only NGDO in the sector that regularly programmes food aid, though there are instances, such as during emergency situations, when NGDOs from the sector will provide food aid.

“We generally work through food security and basic human needs, remote area community development and civil society development, those are our 4 main area’s of programming around the world and they could lead to any angle you want to focus on. We never have supplied food directly - except Bangladesh floods from last year.” Program officer, NGDO2a

“We only do food aid in this project [Burma], we very much support biodiversity-based ecological agriculture programming that’s what we’ve been doing for a long time, (the food aid on the border is related more to the politics of other assistance). In other words, we have a large bilateral programme on capacity building of Burmese refugees and civil society groups in exile, in order to help the Canadian government understand and legitimate that work, there needs to be some acknowledgement that refugees are on the border. So the fact that there are refugees in camps is part of the picture of needing to build capacity of exiles and refugees along the border, so it’s part of a broader programme, we don’t just support food aid in any place. Peter [development officer] has had to [push to get funding] every year. CIDA says this is the last year - and Peter’s managed to get it [funding] and now it will become part of our bilateral programme. So it will be mixed in with our other work, so that goes to support food in the refugee camps along the refugee camps along the Thai- Burma border, which all goes through the Burma border consortium with manages things to the camps but the camps are all run by the refugees themselves, the food is sourced in Thailand.” Program officer, NGDOI

Overall, the NGDO sector is not interested in the provision of food aid as a regular programming activity, though in cases of emergency and also when food aid can assist in legitimizing a programme – Canadian NGDOs are willing to engage in this form of aid.

National Activities Concerning Hunger Alleviation

Besides the regular programming, Canadian NGDOs have a long history of working together to impact policy issues on hunger,

“...there’s a bunch of different movements - there’s the whole food sovereignty movement which is very much out of the World Food Summit process, and then there’s the International Planning Committee in Rome, the civil society group that works in affiliation with the FAO that came out of the process and work all

around the world, and there's a lot of different things that have been going on. Ok, there are the summits but there's the fact that our work started well before the summits and will continue for a very long time... The way policy is made, like you can work on a policy for 25 years in the most persistent, well documented approach and nothing in policy will change. And then something will happen on a political level and it will change overnight. Policy is an extremely not strict science, there are just so many factors that go into policy changing and most of them are political. They're not the logic of X and Y because you can have competing logics and priorities and all those things converging and the influence of civil society and wanting to be re-elected and the influence of industry." programme officer, NGDOI

Canadian NGDOs have been involved in hunger issues for over thirty years from the local to the international levels. Above all, it has been through their individual programming efforts, however the past decade has seen a growing interest in bringing all levels of civil society together. Beginning in 2000 and again in 2004, 2005 and 2006, Canadian civil society, in other words religious groups, many members of the non-profit sector, farmers, academics and small-business owners, as well as some representatives from government and multilateral agencies have been coming together in what has been named the National Food Security Assembly. These opportunities provide the variety of organisational actors, each with different agendas and practices related to hunger, a platform to discuss, share stories and look for solutions to issues related to local, national and international hunger. It has been an attempt to re-energize and re-connect all levels of Canadian actors involved in issues related to hunger. The conferences have also addressed food security from a variety of perspectives, from public to private.

National Food Security Assembly

In 2000, the first National Food Security Conference was held in Toronto. However very little action came from the first Assembly, one NGDO representative explained what she thought transpired after the first attempt in mobilising civil society groups,

“Their own organisational agenda’s, staff changes, executive director’s decisions, it really has to be at the highest levels in an agency to be committed and deeply involved. USC has waned from food security issues because our previous executive director was sick with cancer. Seeds of Survival [programme] has made it through that period without growth though, that’s just life unfolding you know. But for some of the other agencies you have to have good reception on the other end, and there’s a lot of change at CIDA and a lot of unhappiness and a lot of difficult bureaucracy there, that makes it a difficult work environment for the staff who are there, so they don’t feel really engaged, that they feel that they can actually engage with civil society and move it up to the ministerial level.” Program officer, NGDO2a

Although not a lot of emerged from the conference, it was the first time that civil society joined forces to discuss issues of hunger.

The second (Winnipeg 2004) and third (Waterloo 2005) National Food Security Assemblies were considered much more successful. On the final day of the second assembly NGDOs were asked to position themselves according to the effort they could contribute to activities. Though there was great enthusiasm regarding the assembly, many NGDOs positioned themselves at the low end of available energy and resources. An interviewee and NGDO representative that attended the Assembly explained her experience and why she placed herself at the low end of the spectrum,

“The National Food Assembly in October [2004] was amazing, and I’m still sharing it with people. Things are going slowly but they are still moving along, the previous one 4 years ago in Toronto didn’t gel. A coalition or whatever, was mentioned as so unfortunate that nothing kept going and no pressure was on, and it was probably just organisational bad timing, if groups don’t have money to put towards.. But now it seems that there are quite a few agencies that are going to put up funding and be a part of this coalition and keep things going, they feel really strong that we need to keep this going. I put USC in the

second layer, we don't have resources, there may come a time where we could chip in a bit, but we'll sign on and attend meetings and be part of things that are going on. Primarily because we are focused internationally but there are links between the national and international food security issues." Program officer, NGDO2a

This momentum continued through that year until the third assembly, which was equally successful. This Assembly finished by founding a national association of Canadian civil society organisations for the purpose of addressing hunger through both policy and practice, from the local to global levels.

Though the Assemblies attract all levels of Canadian NGDOs, those that are involved in international hunger alleviation are a relatively small group. From a structural perspective, these NGDOs range in size from four to thirty staff members. In most cases, volunteer boards are elected by the membership to govern these NGDOs; these boards act as primary policy-making bodies. Technical and administrative operations of these organisations are usually the responsibility of professional paid staff, supported by committees comprised mainly of volunteers. Notwithstanding the fact that the Canadian NGDO sector is widespread, for the remainder of the discussion, the term *NGDOs* and *NGDO sector* is used to denote only the subset of NGDOs dealing with international hunger-related issues.

Food Security Policy Group

In line with Resource Dependency Theory, organisations will often form inter-organisational linkages to alter their dependence upon government funds.²²⁴ In 2001, the CFGB spearheaded the formation of the Food Security Policy Group (FSPG), a group of some of the most active NGDOs working on hunger-related issues. These NGDOs involved in the network have different programming focuses from service delivery to advocacy. The headquarters of most of the NGDOs are located in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, aside from the CFGB that is located in Winnipeg. The initial priority of the working group was to promote the notion of rural agricultural development as the means to eradicate hunger. The FSPG published their first working paper in 2002, arguing for

policy level changes regarding the federal governments' international priorities. The following is a comment on the effect that the FSPG has had according to an informant from one of the NGDOs in the working group,

“The best chance we had was with Susan Whelan was Minister [for International Cooperation], she wasn't around that long, food wasn't her area, she had the social development priorities which were valid and good and she drove them very hard. Policy papers came out and CIDA did a lot of work defining and refining of what they wanted to spend money on, and then she made a political mistake and was gone pretty quickly” Program officer, NGDO2a

To the dismay of the working group, the priority changes that Whelan was to introduce were dismissed when she lost her posting.

Though the FSPG was the brainchild of the CFGB, it is the only NGDO within the group that regularly programs food aid. In fact, many of the NGDOs within the FSPG are staunchly opposed to the provision of food aid. According to the members of the working group, they create and operate international-level development or advocacy programmes based on sustainable development. By and large, these programmes centre on securing the food supplies in a region, while a lesser amount of programmes deal with advocacy. As a result, they have less use for short-term, food-based approaches such as the provision of food aid. The following is a conversation with a development officer who is also one of the members of the group; in this excerpt he is discussing the perspectives on food aid of the working group, and his own NGDOs',

Q: What is the direction of the FSPG?

“They [members] are a mixed bag. There are a group of people who believe in food aid, and I don't share value in this. Where one has to go and save life, but you don't have to establish the cycle of institutionalisation of relief and aid. So besides that, my view is that food aid has lots of impact, mainly on the

conservation and sustainability of genetic diversity, particularly in the centre of diversity where agriculture originated, where all this genetic diversity even here in the surplus producing countries - so if we're going to displace these ones then the whole food supply system - basically the human race is in jeopardy and vulnerable. So it's not a question of third world issue, it's everybody's issue. So we have to create a mechanism where commercial agriculture, in this case surplus, and other small scale agriculture, which is rich in genetic diversity and which supports subsidized commercial agriculture, should work hand in hand without undermining each other. That's where people fail to understand, we need both. But here they think that there is a homogenized crop and then you have to save lives, but you have to look at the long-term...

Q: ...Is food aid on the agenda of the FSPG?

"Stu Clark [policy officer CFGB], he knows lots of issues and now he's actually changing many things to accommodate these views. I joined this group, off and on, 2-3 years ago and I see many changes coming, trying to understand...Susan Whelan she's no longer there, so I don't know. But there is change, there is hope, still there are various organisations that say this is our mandate and there are also others that oppose tariff barriers and other things just to stay where they are...but in general I think there is an understanding." Program officer, NGDO2b

Although the CFGB is at a loss in regards to a shared understanding of the value of food aid, it maintains this platform to pursue alternate means to end hunger. The FSPG is another example of the growing relationships between the CFGB and the NGDO sector.

This network of NGDOs has sought to effect Canadian policy makers, through dialogue at the national level. The primary platform of the FSPG to date has been the consistent appeal for development through rural agricultural development. It is little surprise that the CFGB spearheaded the establishment of the FSPG. Though it was an initiative of the organisation, the members of the group are, by and large, opposed to the supply of food

aid for development purposes. The working group deals with policy issues that involve hunger, a more accepted position than food aid, which demonstrates to the sector and the public that the CFGB is also interested in assistance through means other than the free distribution of food, of food-for-work types of programs. It shows that the CFGB recognises that hunger is a question of opportunity of livelihoods, not access to food. However, it is also an indication of the dilemma that the CFGB finds itself in. When institutional values are themselves undecided, “complex societies typically hold conflicting goals and beliefs, any of which can be used to rationalize and justify particular practices”. A practice like food aid, considered illegitimate by one measure, could seem fairly legitimate by another.

To sum up, there are a variety of different approaches to alleviating hunger found within the NGDO sector. However, by and large, the development initiatives are not based on approaches relating to food aid. Rather, there is an opposition to this form of development assistance, as the normative features in the sector propose that food aid is not principled on sustainable development practices.

²¹² Oliver 1991

²¹³ DiMaggio & Powell 1991

²¹⁴ Scott 2001

²¹⁵ Food Justice Update. *Canadian Foodgrains Bank*. 4:3 (August 2006) p.1

http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/food_justice_updates.aspx [accessed 01/04/2008]

²¹⁶ Food Justice Update. *Canadian Foodgrains Bank*. 4:2 (May 2006)

http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/food_justice_updates.aspx [accessed 01/04/2008].

²¹⁷ *ibid* p.2

²¹⁸ Food Justice Update, *op. cit.* 4:3 (August 2006) p.2

²¹⁹ Goss Gilroy Inc. *Performance Evaluation of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank: Final Report*. Ottawa (2006) p. ii.

²²⁰ Smillie et al, 1999:77

²²¹ “Canada’s Performance 2004” [online government document] Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/report/govrev/04/cp-rc2_e.asp [accessed January 8, 2008].

²²² *ibid*

²²³ Based on the 2003-2004 CIDA Statistical Report on ODA, the figure is only a small piece in the puzzle, as it is the total funds provided to NGDOs solely for providing emergency relief, and is based only on two NGDOs, the CFGB and an unspecified NGDO, p.10.

²²⁴ Pfeffer & Salancik 2003

CHAPTER 6 – Donor I: Member Church Agencies & Constituents

“Religions are many and diverse, but reason and goodness are one.” E. Hubbard

Member church agencies, their field staff and their constituents, are the building blocks of the CFGB. Not only do they provide essential resources but the philosophical underpinnings of these actors also have strong implications on the organisation. Each of the member churches (also known as ‘Members’) have their own perspective on fighting hunger, and to add to the complexity it is not always in line with their own field staff, located overseas. Furthermore, the constituents or the “backbone” of the CFGB, also play a significant role in the story of the CFGB’s continued commitment to food aid, because of the constituents enjoyed tradition of sharing food.

This chapter provides a deeper understanding of the complex relations between the Members, their field staff and the constituents in their influence on the CFGB. It begins with a description of the Growing Projects, through which the constituents physically raise the funds. This is followed by a characterisation of the farmer-constituents in order to shed light on their connection with the practice of giving food. The third section starts by presenting the member church agencies, and their function as the Board, i.e. guiding force, at the CFGB. Thereafter, stories on hunger alleviation from some of the Members and their field staff are included to illustrate some of the structural and operational differences among Members and how that affects the CFGB’s practices.

6.1 Growing Projects - How We Give

“Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others, cannot keep it from themselves.”

J.M. Barrie

The majority of donations raised for the CFGB are in the form of agricultural products. This is facilitated by the various member church agencies and takes place by way of Growing Projects across rural Canada through the work of church constituents, mainly farmers, and from western Canada, as well as a smaller number of urban churches. A

Growing Project involves a group of people, generally constituents from one of the member churches, that work together to farm a common plot of land, or in an urban centre this can be a community garden. One farmer will offer to set aside a plot of land and with the help of other farmers in the area; they will seed, sow and harvest a crop, for example canola, barley, or corn. A farmer-constituent of one of the member churches commented on his role in contributing to the struggle to end hunger,

“Personally, I get a great pleasure knowing that I am just doing a little bit to feed the hungry in the developing world and yes we do need to consider environmentally and agronomically what would be best for the land, I think that’s always tried to be kept in mind..i guess that’s what keeps driving me, I’m just doing my little part to help to feed the hungry in the world b/c there’s millions of them and they’re not a fortunate as we are.” Farmer/Constituent

After harvest, the production is donated to the CFGB to be used by the member churches for overseas food aid and development projects. For instance, if the project was a donation of pinto beans from Ontario, they would be sold and the monies earned deposited at the CFGB. If a crisis erupted in Zimbabwe, the funds might be used to purchase mung beans or otherwise, as the Zimbabweans do not consume pinto beans. Wheat is the only exception to the rule; it can actually be delivered to the elevator where the Canadian Wheat Board will credit a certain tonnage of wheat, or cash it out, and then the proceeds are passed onto the CFGB. Although the CFGB usually sells the donated crops for whatever product is most appropriate according to geography, the case of wheat is different. The credit with the Canadian Wheat Board must be used to purchase Canadian wheat and nothing else. Last year there was a total of 207 Growing Projects across the country.

Table II. Growing Projects by Province 2006/2007

Province	# Of Projects	Total Acres	Total Yield
Ontario	132	3,668	5,882
Saskatchewan	20	4,775	3,040
Manitoba	19	2,784	2,911
Alberta/B.C.	33	4,249	5,438
Atlantic Region	3	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	207	15,476	17,271*

*total yield in metric tonnes (mt) : 1mt = 1,000 kg or 2,204 lb²²³

Canadian Foodgrains Resource Department Report 2004

Although the bulk of the support comes from rural farmers, there are an increasing number of constituents from urban centres that are raising funds. Church congregations have put on community lunches, concerts, auctions, ball tournaments or yard sales. Growing Projects and community initiatives enable Canadians to contribute to ending hunger in a unique way, more than simply writing a cheque.

Table III. Total Grain & Cash Donated to Member Churches 2003/04

Members	Cash	Grain	Total 2003/04	Variance from 2002/03	Member Transfer 2003/04
ADRA	27,462	32,487	59,949	186%	0
CBC	28728	114,870	143,598	117%	0
CLWR	58082	212,439	270,521	98%	0
C&MA	35570	62,403	97,973	78%	1,065
CRWRC	424114	342,063	766,177	114%	910
NCM	11203	13,862	25,065	34%	32,590
EMC	19464	45,192	64,656	74%	0
MCCC	547537	974,642	1,522,179	102%	400,000
PAOC	79505	209,963	289,468	166%	0
PWS&D	94760	160,575	255,335	93%	9,990
TSA	57999	5,312	63,311	768%	38,985
UCC	440938	465,259	906,197	110%	15,564
WRC	45865	121,427	167,292	86%	160,000
General	1,190,172	867,531	2,057,703	95%	0
Total	\$3,061,399	\$3,628,029	\$6,689,422	103%	\$659,104

Canadian Foodgrains Resource Department Report 2004

The example of the 2003/04-year is illustrated to get an idea of the support provided to member churches. From year to year support to churches vary due to reasons of: limited/vast donor base, poor/good growing conditions for Growing Projects, or a crisis in a country where a member has a high profile.

In addition to the funds raised through the member churches and their constituents, the CFGB has long recognised the need to increase the public donor base. During the 2004 fiscal year, the CFGB received \$7.3 million in public donations, the second highest public donation ever received. The growing support has been perceived as a testament to this possibility. There is a general feeling that a great potential from urban churches is “out there”.

6.2 Church Constituents - Sharing One's Bounty

Like most NGOs, constituents are the heart of the CFGB. While a small percentage of the CFGB's constituents are from urban centres, the vast majority are located in the rural parts of the country. The CFGB's main constituents play a significant role in the continuation of providing food aid overseas. In order to examine their impact on the CFGB, an introduction to rural farm families in Canada is necessary. To do this, a brief description of the current state of farming in Canada will assist in developing a conception of the connections between the CFGB, its rural constituents and the continued support for food aid. This is followed by a presentation of the methods in which the constituents, both rural and urban, contribute to and influence the organisation.

Farming in Canada

Rural constituents make up the vast majority of the CFGB resources that receives the 4:1 match from the GoC. It is also this set of donors that, for over 20 years, has taken pleasure in the tradition of one farming family sharing their “bounty” with a less fortunate farming family. Many of the constituents that take part in Growing projects do it each year and have a long history with the CFGB and the notion of “breaking bread.”

Traditionally, the CFGB has done little to engage with the rural constituents regarding the changing conceptions of fighting hunger, or more importantly the consequences of sending food aid. To understand the implications of the relationship between the CFGB and rural constituents, one must first recognize the declining state of the family farm in Canada.

In the past decade, there has been a decrease in the number of farmers by over 20%, though the perception among farmers is much higher.[↓] An exodus of farming families from the rural areas to the cities is increasing by the year. According to Statistics Canada, the total number of farms has decreased from 293,089 in 1986 to 229,373 in 2006.²²⁶ The farms that have been able to persist generally have become large-scale. It appears that it is mostly smaller farms that have not survived, although family farms still comprise 2/3 of all farms in the country.²²⁷ Additionally, the past decade has seen a 4.2% decrease in the total farm area in hectares owned by farmers, and a 6.1% increase in the total farm area in hectares rented. A farmer from British Columbia commented on the declining state of farming,

The growing reality seems to be that the average Canadian farmer must be large-scale to survive. Expenses are rising while profits are diminishing. In the 2002 Canadian Census, large farms had the best ratio of expenses to sales, and small-scale farms fared the worst. Another farmer and constituent from Manitoba, one of the main Prairie Provinces, explained the current insecurity associated with farming,

“Definitely we export most of what we produce, so that we’re always looking beyond the borders...We have to do whatever it takes to survive and it is so so tight right now, with the cattle industry with BSE, I was talking to some people in Strathclair [small town], they’re solely cattle, they do have off farm jobs, but they don’t have much crop land at all and you pencil out the bottom line and

[↓] This statement, as well as the overall perception of the state of the family farm in Canada is based on many informal conversations with farmers, participation in two National Food Security Conferences and independent research that has taken place during the study.

*you're losing money and basically just don't know when to bail out." Farmer-
Constituent*

A farmer from the Western Canada added to the picture of the current state of the family farming in relation to the difficult economic situation of farmers and the need to be a double-income family to survive,

"It would be interesting to ask people what is your source of income? What is your debt? What are your interest payments – what are you paying out? Where is your income coming from? Because there is an awful lot of self-delusion, partly because people simply can't face that if your wife wasn't teaching school your farm wouldn't be making it. They may be saying yea they have an income, and this is what's clear if you look over the years, if you took out various subsidies and off-farm employment and put the farm on its own, you'd come up with a radically different picture. People are dishonest about it. I don't want to say that they're intentionally dishonest about it; they just don't want to face the reality. They look at the pot at the end of the year and don't want to break it out, because what are you saying 'I'm a loser'. To admit that their farming operation loses money year after year, that's hard to do in a macho culture."
Farmer (also known as Food Systems Analyst)

In a conversation with another farmer from central Manitoba, he offered an overall rationalization of main issues associated with farming in western Canada; the following is a summation of the conversation.[¶] He explained that farming has long become a business, where the trend is towards bigger and bigger farms. Anywhere between 300-400 acres is now needed in order to have any cash flow or profitability, and to pay the farm's debt on the principal. In keeping with this, he felt that it is a matter of economics; farmers must invest in top-of-the-line equipment, and continue to buy down the cost per acre. By and large, farmers have their own style of farming and their own preferred crops or products – ultimately they prefer to be self-sufficient. As a consequence, they have no

[¶] Interview with farmer, August 2005

common political voice. Whereas in Africa or Europe, for example, there can be 100 farmers working the same amount of land, as one farmer in Canada. Furthermore, in terms of commodities Soybean oil is taking over globally and canola, which has been a key export from Canada, is becoming a specialty market.

The tradition of working a plot of land collectively to donate to other agriculturalists overseas is a much-cherished practice in the rural parts of Canada, which plays a significant role on the continued focus of food aid at the CFGB.

6.3 Member Church Agencies – An Assortment of Missions?

The CFGB is a member-driven organisation consisting of 15 Canadian Christian denominations. Each of the member churches has their headquarters in different locations across the country. The members not only vary in size and location, but also the level of development activities overseas. The member churches play a considerable role in the overall decision-making of the NGDO by means of a board that meets twice yearly. Each Member appoints two constituents to sit on the executive board, additionally one constituent out of the lot is appointed to act as general director for a period of two years.

Each Member has an account with the CFGB. A member church elicits resources from their constituents and subsequently those resources are designated to the Members account. So in that sense the NGDO functions as a bank, where each Member raises resources to be held in their account, and draws upon those resources when needed. Monies raised from constituents come directly from church congregations as well as community groups.

At the end of the day, every Member can have their funds matched by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) of the GoC, on a 4:1 basis if the Member agrees to use the funds according to the CIDA Grant Agreement. This Agreement stipulates that out of the total of the 4:1 budget, the CFGB must use 90% of the funds on

shipping products from Canada, and the remaining 10% can be used on other essentials, for example purchasing products locally.

The member churches promote the match to their constituents - that for each dollar they raise, the government will match it 4 times - to attract as much funds as possible. An overseas field officer from one of the member churches exemplifies the way that constituents regard the government match,

“Our constituency in Canada, are Christian Reform farmers, because there are many and they are well paid - they love CFGB and they love the 4:1 match from the Canadian government. When I was home a couple of years ago, I went with these folks the Mayberry’s, who are the CFGB representatives, who work with the farmers growing projects..and I spent two days with them just talking to farmers and farmers groups that were growing stuff that would be given to CFGB. Canadian farmers love CFGB, and every single one of them said ‘that 4:1 match from the Canadian government. I give \$100, they give \$400’ that is the biggest thing going. Unbelievable. So to some extent you really want to promote - CRWRC promotes - CFGB promotes - that 4:1 match as a very effective way to spend your donations, and we want to show our constituencies that CRWRC has projects overseas that are CFGB and that are spending that money, basically.” CRWRC Kenya

In order to get as much “bang for your buck”, the CFGB tries to make the 4:1 match on most of their overseas programmes. However, this is not always possible, such as in cases where the commodity requested is not grown in Canada, or if they have already exhausted the 10% of the budget that can be used on purchasing commodities from elsewhere.

Besides the Member accounts, individuals that do not have a specific Member they want to donate to, can contribute to a 16th account called the General Account. The General Account is outside of the regular member church accounts, and it does not receive the 4:1 match. With that said, it has a large resource base and Members draw on this account for

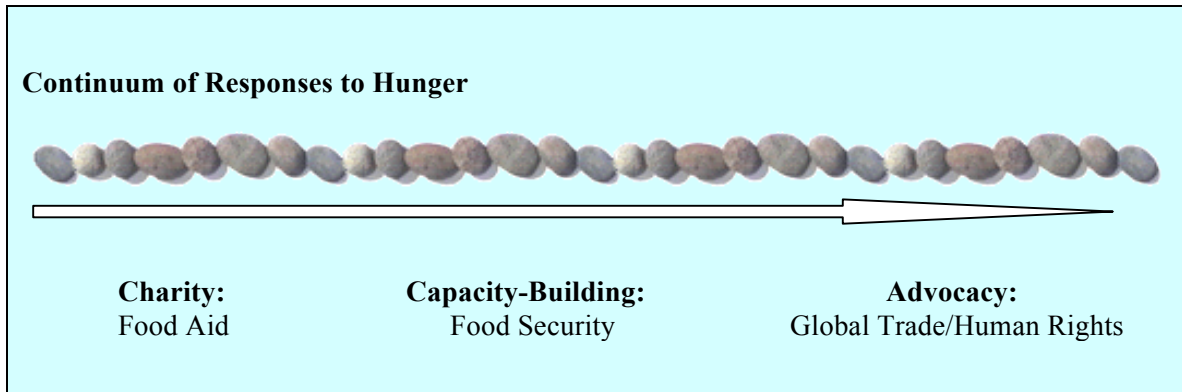
projects that are outside of the funding requirements by CIDA. The CFGB can match those types of projects with funds from the General Account, as well as in cases where a Member does not have enough resources in their own account, but has a project that they would like to support. In that situation, the Member submits an application for using General Account monies.

An example of a situation like this is if rice is requested for a project; rice is not normally grown in Canada so the CFGB will attempt to purchase it in, or near, the area where the project is located. So long as the CFGB remains within this 10% limit of the Agreement, the project can get a 4:1 match but once it has been exceeded, even though it is a project that would normally be accepted, the donor will only have their own funds to provide, or in some cases the General Account may make a 2:1 match. Another example relates to the stipulation that it must be Canadian food products that the funds are used for. Frequently, seeds can get CIDA matched funds, but it is usually not an option to purchase tools. The stipulations in the funding agreement can make the operations challenging, as in the case of seeds and tools, which need to go hand-in-hand if a farmer intends to plant a new harvest after a disaster. However funds for these types of area's needs to be issued through the General Account, as they will not get the matching 4:1 grant.

Variations in Approaches to Hunger

From the establishment of the CFGB, member churches have their own story of how they became established and involved in hunger alleviation, their different perspectives on hunger and their role in fighting it. Some are mostly interested in the charity aspect of hunger, while others have been working on food security and advocacy issues for decades. Some of the member churches believe that a lot of what they do is knowledge transfer, while others focus on providing materials like projects that supply seeds and tools after a disaster. The perspectives of the Members can be located along different points of a continuum; from charity in the form of giving food aid, to capacity-building through long-term development projects, to advocacy issues such as global trade and human rights.

Figure 7. Continuum of Responses to Hunger



In connection with the continuum, on many occasions the personnel at the CFGB explained that the different perspectives could also be understood according to an ancient proverb, “give a man a fish – teach a man how to fish – help a man get access to the pond”.

The variety in working frameworks of the Members have implications for their programming initiatives in that the only perspective they can all agree upon is the necessity of “giving a man a fish”. For example, from the establishment of the CFGB, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), while it was involved in shipping food aid, had already reached the end of the hunger continuum in terms of its involvement in farmer’s advocacy. As a result, although it continues to play a limited role in the shipment of food aid from Canada, its priority concerns long-term capacity building programmes and advocacy. While this is the story of the MCC, other Members remain only at the first stage in the continuum. There are also those Members, for instance the United Church of Canada, though it has a far-reaching perspective on hunger, it primarily supplies funds to other members, also those only dealing with the first stage.^v The issue that many Members have not moved past the first stage on the “hunger continuum” serves as a constraint in moving beyond the first stage, or the provision of food aid.

^v Conversation at CFGB, December 2004

Types of Development Activities

In order to get a better picture of the activities of the Members, the following is a description of some of their activities in Canada and overseas.

MCC is the largest and most active member church agency and also holds the highest budget at the CFGB. MCC programs globally, and has different accounts that they can access depending on the nature of the activity. A project officer from the head quarters explains about the structure of the agency,

“We are a Bi-national office, straddles both US and CAN, in this office there are 6 provincial offices. MCC Canada oversees 4 regional offices and then MCC US and the Bi-national office does the international work. We are in international programme department, 25% of salary is paid by MCC because we do many Canadian accounts. We have the Asia desk, Latin America desk, Africa desk - we have connections in 52 countries.” MCC Director of Food, Disaster & Material Resources Section, Members in Canada1

In general, the Members view the CFGB account as an opportunity to access funds for emergencies, in particular. Most members also have another account set up within their agency and only through the channels at the CFGB when an opportunity to get the 4:1 match presents itself. They can get a 4:1 match on projects primarily related to shipping food aid, but not in the case of development programmes, unless they are related to Food-For-Work types of development projects. The MCC, for example, has an account for projects related to hunger, worth approximately half a million dollars.[∅] In the next citation, the director of MCC’s Food, Disaster and Material Resources Section describes how they employ CFGB funds,

“In sudden onset disasters like in the Philippines, hurricane Mitch, and sudden big disasters. The latest is Darfur, of course man-made ... so in that we would respond that 70- 80% of our work through CFGB and we would also respond

[∅] Information on MCC based on informal discussion with – MCC, Food, Disaster and Material resources, Willie Reimer (director) & Jackie Hogue (program manager), see Appendix *Members in Canada1*
Why Food Aid Persists & Food Security Recedes

with our own, the opportunities to respond are with our own account and the General Account with CFGF.” MCC Director of Food, Disaster & Material Resources Section, Members in Canada1

This does well to illustrate the way the accounts at the CFGF are perceived by Members - primarily for emergency purposes. In the case of the MCC, it does both emergency and development projects and has a large pool of resources to draw from. The agency is also working in trade advocacy, so that farmers have a voice in World Trade negotiations and the debates over North American agricultural subsidies. MCC’s projects range from smaller-scale to the maximum of \$40,000 per project. The same director as above explains in the next quote, about the MCC programmes and how the constituents feel about donating,

“Very few NGOs have the material response mechanism, from an economic point of view its not terribly efficient, sending by container, costs a lot to ship although for us the multiplier effects are valuable, and people get very interested in the issue ... So we still keep our policy both local purchase and shipments, and our constituents are interested. People like to put together kits. We want to send top quality, useful [materials], not just a symbol. On food security side we’re trying to get much more into water. Different categories, collection, storage, sand dams in Kenya - Massai food security project. HIV/AIDS and nutrition is something we’re concerned about. We have a million dollar fund which is our own money, although CIDA comes a bit into that.”
MCC Director of Food, Disaster & Material Resources Section, Members in Canada1

According to the above statement, MCC seems to prioritise keeping their constituents involved in their development efforts, even at the high economic and environmental cost of using containers to ship materials overseas. In this particular example, the Member has a strong resource base; this is not to imply that this is the situation among all Members.

Though the priorities as the headquarters of the MCC suggest that shipping food and products overseas is a main activity, the story of overseas field staff is different. The MCC country representative interviewed has been in Kenya since 2001. He explained that their role is to partner with indigenous grassroots organisations; they have 12 Partners in total, in the country. MCC Kenya works in three main areas: agriculture and food security; health and HIV/AIDS; and peace building.[∩]

In terms of agriculture and food security, the representatives' task is to provide programmatic support to the Partners and to facilitate both food security and food aid programmes. The food aid programming that has been taking place in the past 6-8 years has largely been in the form of Food-For-Work. MCC Kenya has not distributed any grain; during emergencies it has always been purchased locally. On the other hand, the food security projects have taken the form of terracing, water conservation through drip irrigation and dams, providing resources for skilled labour and materials, and teaching settled agricultural techniques. The country representative explained that the CFGF funds go primarily for these types of food security projects. This is the result of monetizing the Canadian grain when it arrives in Kenya. According to the country representative, philosophically MCC Kenya would like to get away from Food-For-Work and focus on food security but because it is partner-driven and their Partners want both - it is unable to drop food aid. He also revealed that MCC Kenya does not look for food aid projects, however that it is hard to move away from giving food once it has been started.

Another active Member is ADRA, the branch of the Seventh-Day Adventists responsible for mission and development work overseas. The ADRA office in Tanzania is very active in various food security projects.[⊕] The country representative for ADRA in Tanzania, an American fellow, explains the mandate of their agency,

[∩] Information on MCC Kenya based on informal discussions with country representative, see Appendix *Members in Field2*

[⊕] Information on ADRA Tanzania is based on informal discussions with country representative, see Appendix *Members in Field3*

“We cover a wide range of things. ADRA in Tanzania has done very well to install gravity fed water systems to supply large areas and villages, we also put one in another area that provides water for 47,000 people. So what this means in practical terms, is that people don’t have to walk for 6 hours a day to feed their animals and to get water for their families. And that’s not an exaggeration at all. Life was just going to fetch water, now life is much different, they have water near by so they can grow gardens, so they can build houses more easily, and they can use their time differently, and its improved their lives What we’d like to share overall to you is that it’s not just providing something to a community, but we educate them. And we work laterally with other organisations who have other competencies that we don’t have so the marketing people, the research people, and others. Like the banana’s that we put out in the field have also been provided to the research station right down the road where we’re going now, so that they can also learn from the growing of those and we can share experiences.” ADRA Tanzania, Members in Field3

PWS&D is the agency from the Presbyterian Church of Canada and also a Member of the CFGB. PWS&D is a smaller church agency and programs roughly \$400,000 per year in international assistance.[⊗] A representative from PSW&D gave details on the CFGB-funded projects, she stated that they have mainly been based on emergency food aid, with supplementary some food security types of programmes, such as community seed programmes with organic seeds, school feeding projects and training on nutrition. The representative from PWS&D described that many of the programmes they offer have a nutrition component, which allows them to get the 4:1 CIDA match. She also explained that PWS&D has no formal policy on GMOs, though they try to respect the recipient countries choice whether it is for or against them.

The Christian World Relief Council (CRWRC) is the development organisation of the Dutch Reform Church. The Disaster Response Coordinator for East Africa explained that

[⊗] Information on PWS&D is based on informal discussions with Africa Program Coordinator, see *Appendix Member in Canada2*

they have projects in Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda.³⁸ Their projects range in size from \$50,000 to \$1.5million in each country, and these are primarily based on a local purchase or, at times, monetization. CRWRC also has one permanent relief staff in Eastern, Southern Africa and normal relief and development staff. They believe that with the permanent position they have been able to do a lot more relief than they normally would have, also they are able to deal with larger projects, because of the increased expertise in assessment, project proposals, training staff and writing reports. In Kenya, CWRC has 4 program staff and 2 regional staff. Many development staff are expatriate's however there are a large number of national program staff as well.

To sum up, when it comes to addressing the issue of hunger alleviation, the member church agencies come from a mixture of distinct histories, philosophy's and practices, however the one point that they can agree upon is the first stage in the hunger continuum – those suffering from hunger shall be provided for. In addition to the connection with the scriptures, the major driving force comes from the constituents themselves.

This chapter was an empirical presentation of the key resource provider to the CFGB - the member church agencies, field staff and along constituents. The next chapter looks at the last key provider of essential resources to the CFGB – the Agribusiness Industry.

²²⁵ “Growing Projects” Canadian Foodgrains Bank. [website]
<http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/growingprojects/> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²²⁶ “Total Farm Area, Land Tenure, and Land in Crops by Province.” *Statistics Canada*.
<http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/agrc25a.htm> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²²⁷ “Agriculture Census” CBC News Online. [online news] May 15, 2002
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/agriculture/index.html> [accessed 01/04/2008].

³⁸ Information on CRWRC East Africa is based on informal discussions with East Africa program director, see Appendix *Members in Field 1*

CHAPTER 7 – Donor II: The Agri-Business Industry

As it has been shown thus far, there are many different interests in the provision of food aid. It can be argued, that one of the more contentious actors to be involved with the CFGB emerges from the private sector. By this I refer to the aid contributions by transnational corporations, namely those in the Agribusiness industry.^α

Figure 8.

As previously discussed, 80% of the CFGBs sponsorship comes from the GoC, with the remaining 20% financed by donation revenues from the public and in-kind support from multinational Agribusiness companies.[◇]

Corporate Commitment to Growing Projects 2004
Monsanto - \$80,000 - \$100 000 in inputs
Dow Agro - \$50,000 in chemicals
Agricore United - \$50,000 in seed
Syngenta - \$30,000 in chemicals
Philom Bios Inc: \$ not predetermined, in inoculants

Agribusiness provides its support by donating to Growing Projects. Once the CFGB has established a Growing Project, in other words once a group of farmers have made the decision to labour together, they turn to Agribusiness corporations for the necessary inputs. Annually, Agribusiness corporations provide a specified quantity of fertilizer, pesticides, and seed free of charge to the Growing Projects. Growing Projects can directly contact the corporations for inputs; otherwise the CFGB will facilitate the transaction. From year to year, the precise amount of funds can vary slightly, or a new sponsor may join, but generally the CFGB

^α The concept of agribusiness has evolved over the years. Historically it has been viewed as “the sum total of all operations involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm supplies; production operations on the farm; and the storage, processing and distribution of farm commodities and the items made from them.” This definition established agriculture as an industry that goes far beyond simply growing crops and raising animals. Today, there are many definitions, but what endures is the recognition of the breadth and depth of agribusiness industry. For purposes of this study, agribusiness encompasses all business activities that take place from the production, transformation and provision of food, fibre, chemicals and pharmaceutical substrates.

[◇] The Canadian Wheat Board also provides a small contribution in terms of providing space in storage facilities that is free of charge.

can depend on the Agribusiness companies' support. The table shown above illustrates the regular corporate sponsors and their type of contributions.

This chapter introduces the Agribusiness industry and its relationship to food aid, from the global to the local contexts. The Canadian Agribusiness industry is one of the CFGB's main donors. However, in light of the controversial environment surrounding Agribusiness and its promotion of genetically modified crops to end hunger, a relationship between the industry and the CFGB raises certain questions. Though, the direct effects of the relationship are primarily financial, indirectly a selection of political and environmental implications exists that play a role in influencing the programming priorities of the CFGB.

CFGB Food Aid during the Southern Africa Humanitarian Crisis

In 2002, southern Africa was struck with yet another drought. Nations were in need of emergency food supplies, yet they rejected a shipment of Canadian food relief from the CFGB because they did not want food aid with GMO properties. The CFGB chose to suffer the cost of the original shipment and anxiously sought to purchase local food from the region.

Governments in the drought-affected nations argued that rejecting the CFGBs food aid was out of concern for the long-term livelihoods of their people. For one, they feared that farmers might save a portion of the GMO corn to plant to following year thereby contaminating their native corn strains.¹ But more importantly, in a letter written by the South African Bishops', they supported the right of Africans in questioning GM aid, "The long-term health effects of consuming [GM] food have not been assessed...Moreover, the damage to the environment would be largely irreversible. Once released, genetically engineered organisms become part of our ecosystem."¹ Though the rejection of GM corn by the famine-prone nations had potentially severe consequences, it was the long-term livelihood considerations that were took priority.

To shed some light on the intricate details of this relationship, this section will present the story in three main parts, beginning with: 1) the global Agribusiness industry; followed by 2) Agribusiness in Canada and lastly 3) the NGOs sector and the question of biotechnology. The aim is to present the different perceptions that exist surround this industry and GMOs, in order to better understand the implications of this relationship on the CFGB. The majority of data collected in this section is based on document analysis, interviews and informal conversations.

7.1 Introducing the Global Agribusiness Industry

We commit in the Pledge to deliver high-quality products that are beneficial to our customers and the environment with sound and innovative science and thoughtful and effective stewardship. Monsanto, Our Pledge on Respect²²⁸

So how can the interest of the Agribusiness industry and the provision of food aid be rationalized? Basically, it can be identified through the corporate interests of the industry. The future of the Agribusiness industry depends on the continual growth, financial and otherwise, of biotechnology around the globe.

The Agribusiness industry has been globally marketing food and plant biotechnology as the answer to the pressure on world food supplies in light of increasing populations. Their contribution to the growing food demands has been via the introduction of GMOs, which they claim have higher nutritional content, last longer than their natural counterparts and produce greater yields on the same number of acres.^β Additionally, the Industry asserts that farmer's livelihoods can be more secure because GM crops protect themselves from destructive insects and weeds, or disease through genetic altering that makes these crops resistant to natural processes.

^β See, for example, Monsanto <http://www.monsanto.com/monsanto/layout/products/default.asp>

However, as GMOs have only been in the food supply for a short while, the long-term effects and safety on people's health and on the environment are highly contested. For example, environmentalists oppose GMOs based on the possibility of GMO insect- or herbicide-resistant traits spreading to other plant varieties. Public health specialists have discussed the health risks involved from the possible transfer of allergens or carcinogens, to a concern over the consumption of marker genes that might lead to antibiotic resistance. A further apprehension lies in the fact that control over the GMO industry is held by a small number of transnational corporations specializing in these seeds and pesticides.²²⁹

The Agribusiness industry is primarily owned and operated by six transnational Agrochemical corporations that control 80% of the global market.²³⁰ In 2001, each of these companies had annual sales ranging from US\$1billion – US\$6billion. Monsanto and Dupont are two of the leading giants in biotechnology and both have headquarters in North America. They have operational strategies that focus primarily on the potentials of agribusiness. Monsanto in particular has outlined a plan to use plant biotech as the number one force to spearhead the corporations' agriculture, foods and pharmaceutical businesses.²³¹

The US is the global leader in the production of food biotechnology. In 2002, more than 96 million acres in the US was seeded with biotech varieties of pest-resistant Soya bean, corn and other crops, with Canada falling into second place at approximately 8.6 million acres in Canada.²³² By 2003, development in the US had continued to skyrocket; as it accounted for 63% of the global acreage planted with GM varieties.²³³ Furthermore, the US industry has produced the most GM foods available on the market, with a total of 45 different types.²³⁴ The latest report from 2006 shows that the US remains in the lead by having the biggest absolute increase in biotech crop area in any country, estimated at another 4.8 million hectares for that year alone.²³⁵

Beginning from 1996 to 2006, developing countries have been increasingly enlarging the area of biotech crops. By 2006, countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa aspired to join the ranks of the US in terms of significant increases of biotech crops, namely biotech

cotton and maize, with India having the largest proportional increase at 192% (total 3.8 mil ha), South Africa just trailing behind with 180% (total 1.4 mil ha), followed by the Philippines at 100% increase (total 0.2 mil ha).²³⁶ Though North America remains the overall leader in global biotech crop area, 40% now resides in developing countries.

The Contentious Issue of GMOs

Internationally, limitations on imports of GM crop varieties in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as the rejection of GMOs by many transnational companies are in effect. The European Union's (EU) restriction on GMOs that began in 1999 resulted in a snowball effect throughout the world. Many less industrialised nations banned imports of North American GMO products largely because of unknown long-term effects on the environment, as well as physical effects for those who consume the food. An additional reason was the potential loss of the European market if their own crops were to become contaminated with GM varieties.²³⁷ Today, however, several GMOs are marketed in the EU. It has dropped the moratorium on GMOs and instead set up a strict import regime. According to the new trade regulations (Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003), a full risk review has to be complete before any GMO can enter the market.²³⁸ The review must identify and assess any potential direct or indirect, instant or gradual effects of the GMO, and the cumulative and long-term effects on human health and the environment.

Further evidence of countries safeguarding themselves against the uncertainties of GM products can be seen in the overwhelming endorsement of the Cartagena Protocol, which was adopted by the majority of UN member states in March 2004.²³⁹ It is a protocol on the Convention on Biological Diversity that provides Parties the opportunity to consider the modalities on the practice of safe transfer, handling and use of GMOs that may have a harmful effect on national biodiversity. Countries have the capability to ban imports of GMOs if they do not feel the product is safe. It also obliges exporters to label shipments containing GMOs.[¶]

[¶] For more information on the Cartagena Protocol see the report "The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: An analysis of results." [IISD Briefing Note] by the Institute for International Sustainable Development (Winnipeg, Canada) www.iisd.org/pdf/biosafety.pdf [accessed 2 August 2007]

Less industrialised countries are reacting in a variety of ways towards the global proliferation of GM products. GM exports were completely rejected in Zambia because of a perception that they may be harmful to health.²⁴⁰ Many less industrialised nations reacted to the possibility of GM imports, for instance a "farmers' jury" in Mali, convened on the issue of GMOs and later informed their government that they were not interested in genetically modified crops being grown in the country.²⁴¹ Thailand's reaction was less stringent; it made the import of GM soy seeds legal, but only for consumption purposes.²⁴² As a reaction to Thailand's ban on the production of GM cereals, rice exporters in India recently signed an agreement to keep GM rice out of cultivation within their country.²⁴³ On the other end of the spectrum there have been some countries that have opened their borders to the production of GMOs in hopes of potential market gains; from the late 1990s, Romania has harvested well over 100,000 tonnes of pesticide resistant GM soya.²⁴⁴

Even in many states in the US attempts to pass some form of GM free legislation have been made. In a report compiled by the New Hampshire Health Freedom Coalition, in 2001 there were as many as 19 states in the process of enacting some form of legislation that would restrict the provision of GMOs across State lines.²⁴⁵ These restrictions varied, from 5-year moratoriums on the planting of GM crops, to prohibiting the sale of GM foods unless labelled, to making seed companies liable in the event of the contamination of non-GM crops.²⁴⁶ Regardless of the different proposals, the legislative activity against GM products appears to be growing.

Another area that's been affected has been the private sector. From the outset, many corporations in Europe rejected the inclusion of GMO ingredients in their food products. An article by the *Journal of World Trade*, describes the reaction of many private sector actors over the commercial use of GMOs,

"In May 1999, major food chains in the UK (Sainsbury, Tesco, Marks and Spencer, Burger King and McDonalds) announced their intention to avoid GMO ingredients. In Spain, Pryca, which had been the largest importer of soy-based GMOs and a producer of GMO corn, announced it would no longer use GMO

ingredients in its branded products. The French food company Carrefour instituted a similar policy. In Switzerland, Nestle announced a temporary halt on GMO product use, and Russia announced that after 1 July 1999, any imported GMO product would require testing and licensing.”²⁴⁷

Giants in the food industry halted their use of GM products. In 1995, Monsanto introduced the Newleaf potato, the GM product marketed as the answer to the fight against the Colorado potato beetle. By 1996, 50,000 US acres were planted with the GM crop but output fell by almost 80% in 2000, when leading transnational potato buyers such as McDonalds, Burger King and Frito-Lay stopped selling products made from GM potatoes.²⁴⁸ Monsanto launched an even stronger GM potato the same year but it was unable to restore interest, this resulted in a decision to take the product off the market.

The question of GMOs can also be seen through the introduction of labelling of foods. The European market has long made its statement by limiting the amount of GM products on its shelves and the recent introduction of mandatory labelling of foods containing GM^y, and an increasing number of grocery chains in North America are following suit in the rising demand for food that is grown and processed without GM ingredients.²⁴⁹ A leading natural food specialist from a foremost fruit market in Canada explained the current trend towards organic foods, “A couple of years ago, it was a hard sell to get organics in grocery stores...but everyone is more educated about all the categories of organics now, and it isn’t difficult to source products. We get a lot of requests from consumers.”²⁵⁰ The influxes of organic products on grocery store shelves also speak to the growing apprehension over GM products.

To complicate the matter further for less industrialised countries, some European governments are trying to make farmers accountable for ensuring that GM contamination does not occur through imports. In a discussion with a representative from a Canadian

^y For Further information see the EU (February 2006) report from the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection on “Labeling: competitiveness, consumer information and better regulation for the EU,” ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/betterregulation/competitiveness_consumer_info.pdf [accessed 10 September 2007]

farmers association working with farmers in East Africa, she explained that Europe's increasing concern over GMOs has resulted in a recent EU policy on GM that will make African farmers liable for any GM products coming from Africa to Europe,

“Europe just changed its traceability policy. What they want to do with all kinds of things [to do] with food - raw materials and processed, they want to be able to circulate it freely within Europe, but in order to do that they need to make uniform the sanitary norms, which included pesticide residues and that also for GMO there was a law passed for traceability, but the way they do that is with business, each business, especially the owners are responsible - for the product they sell or pass on in the food chain – and [must be] safe according to the norms and regulations of Europe. So they [farmers] are responsible to ensure that in the processing they do, they won't add any contaminant or anything...they have to make sure they don't break the cold chain! But they also need to prove that the people they bought their inputs from respected the norms, so you've got this whole certification that is coming into play and that regulation is applicable Jan.1 [2006] and so the importers of food in Europe are accountable, so whoever sells them the food in Africa also followed the same regulations followed in Europe. That's a catastrophe for the countries that are exporting a lot of veggies and fruit to Europe, if its not big farmers there's no way they are going to be able to make it.” Program officer, NGDO4

Are GMOs such a hot topic for debate? The main argument for this technology centres on its actual benefits – increasing crop yield, especially in areas that suffer from drought and pests. This issue is largely undetermined, in North America where most of these technologies were developed; farmers find that there may be a small increase in the crop yields, though not to a significant extent. The picture in less industrialised countries is quite different. Many reports point to issues where Agribusiness has failed to live up to its GM crop pledges. In the South of India, the BT cotton crop failed despite the claims of Mahyco, the Indian subsidiary of Monsanto. The GM cotton yield was approximately five times lower than that of the conventional cotton and weighed less, inflicting a significant financial loss to farmers.²⁵¹ In the Indian state of Bihar, Monsanto GM maize

seeds were planted in 140,000 of the 180,000 acres of the maize area with a promise of yields from 80 to 85 quintals per acre, however the seeds failed to germinate and farmers were left with an actual yield of not even 10% expected yield.²⁵² A farmer from one of the GM-affected districts said, “Farmers sowed Cargil [Monsanto subsidiary] seeds over hundreds of acres in Muzaffarpur district but the low output has devastated us. We had not faced such a problem earlier.”²⁵³ Consequently, Monsanto’s license to sell seeds in the State was revoked.

A food systems analyst from Canada that was researching GM crops explains about the reaction he encountered at the US headquarters for Monsanto,

“I was in St. Louis and arranged to visit their [Monsanto] office and talk with the PR person, my appointment was with a woman but she was joined by the head of the PR department, and it was very, very clear that the minder was there to make sure that this woman didn’t step out of line. That was an interesting indication - they don’t trust their own employees. It’s pathetic but it’s also bloody dangerous.” Food Systems Analyst

The cautious character of the Agribusiness companies is recognition of the volatility surrounding the industry. Due to the mounting global concern over GMOs, its questionable benefits, the security of GM food products, environmental uncertainty, and the potential loss of markets, the environment surrounding GMOs is unstable.

7.2 Agribusiness in Canada

The picture in Canada surrounding the Agribusiness Industry has some similarities, as well as differences, in regards to the perceptions of GMOs on the international scene. In 2003, Canada was ranked second globally in the number of biotech companies and first in research and development expenditures from biotechnology-related products.²⁵⁴ Today, Canada is fourth, after Argentina and Brazil, as the largest producers of GM varieties, with 6.1 million hectares.²⁵⁵

The most widely produced GM cereal in the country is RR Canola. Canada is the largest global producer of canola, with roughly 60% of Canadian canola coming from GM strains. In the following quote, a Manitoban farmer presents a very mixed perspective on farming RR (RoundUp Ready, developed by Monsanto) Canola,

“Since RR Canola came out first, I guess that on our farm I said that agronomically and economically it may be more [productive], so economically it has been a good fit, because we have to do what we can to make ends meet and it’s a nice clean simple system to put in your seed and spray it once or twice and it kills everything but canola. You get nice clean crops and less dockage than other years when we grew conventional canola, if the chemical didn’t happen to work that we used before....I guess that I was fortunate a number of years ago to go down to St. Louis, Missouri on a Monsanto tour and I toured facilities down there and saw where the research was done, and I forget a lot of the detail and not that I understood the biological scope of how this GMO works, but its not really as scary as some people are wanting to make it out to be, all it is changing proteins kind of thing. So to be thinking you’re creating a monster I guess you never say never, but I don’t know that it is as scary as some people are ... As far as food safety, I personally I don’t think I have a problem at all...It’s a nice clean way, economic and agronomic way of growing canola...I guess it’s easier, better results and higher yields, and we have to face it, we are paid on quantity also quality - but quantity. And if you can find a system that helps you produce better quality, more quantity, we flood the system, I know. But it should be more dollars in your pockets if the prices stay fairly consistent. I guess I don’t want you to leave here thinking that we’re not even thinking of food safety, we’re very cognisant of that, I don’t want to be producing something that will kill people, but there are those out there that are dead against GM because they think its changing a natural thing, and who knows maybe we shouldn’t, but when you have someone explain to you exactly what is happening its not all that scary.” Farmer/Constituent

The controversy enveloping this technology is characters in the contradictory nature of the above statement; this is symptomatic of the uncertain environment of GMOs.

International restrictions on the proliferation of GMOs have also had harmful effects on the Canadian export economy. An example is what happened between Canada and China's trade in Canola. Canola sales average approximately US\$2 billion annually, so when China, its foremost customer, scrutinised Canadian RR Canola, it was taken seriously.²⁵⁶ In 2002, China imposed new restrictions on the export of this grain and began requiring that safety certificates on all GM crops be granted before approval of shipments.²⁵⁷ As the majority of Canadian Canola exports are GM and the rest contain traces amounts, Canola growers would essentially be eliminated from any trade with China for the remainder of the year.

Another outcome is the nation-wide contamination of non-GM cereals by GM cereals. It has resulted with dire effects for Canadian organic producers battling the Agribusiness industry by means of the legal system. Cases of certified organic farmers losing their licenses as a result of crop contamination by GM varieties blowing into their fields are becoming more prevalent.^x To achieve organic certification, there is zero tolerance towards GMOs in the seed supply as well as large restrictions on applying most crop chemicals.²⁵⁸ As a result, in 2002, the organic canola farmers of Saskatchewan sought damages from Monsanto over the loss of this market when the corporations introduced GM canola.

Though many conventional farmers initially embraced biotechnology in Western Canada, many have also joined in the fight against this technology or the introduction of new forms of biotech. The latest case brought against the industry was regarding the introduction of GM wheat. In 2004, Monsanto attempted to get federal approval for a new GM variety of wheat called *RR Wheat*. However, international customers responsible for purchasing 87% of the wheat produced within Western Canada, require a guarantee that it is GM-free.²⁵⁹ This resulted in a Japanese group carrying a petition

^x See <http://www.organicconsumers.org/gefood/organicfarmers602.cfm> for more information of the lawsuit from Canadian organic farmers versus Monsanto.

signed by 414 Japanese companies (claiming to represent over one million people), with the message that if GM wheat was commercialized Japanese consumer will stop buying Canadian wheat.²⁶⁰ The representatives stated that they were only conceding to their consumer's demands - GM wheat is not an option.

Nadege Adam, the spokeswoman for the *Council of Canadians*^δ comments on GM agriculture in Canada, "*This is the unfortunate consequence of Canadian farmers having to grow GM food. The international market is closing its doors to it. I don't know how many markets we're going to lose before Canada figures out that customers don't want to eat GM products.*"²⁶¹ Subsequently, organic growers, conventional farmers and international groups representing customer organisations voiced their rejection of the introduction of GM wheat to the GoC. The CWB also released a statement regarding the devastating effects that farmers would suffer if GM wheat were introduced on the market,

"We believe that genetically modified wheat varieties shouldn't be introduced until it can be shown that there will be clear benefits for western Canadian farmers and the Canadian handling system can segregate genetically modified varieties to meet customer requirements. Farmers have clearly told us that while there may be some potential agronomic benefits to growing GM wheat, but given the current environment, those benefits do not outweigh the market risks."
CWB chairman²⁶²

The following statement sums up the opinion of the bulk of Canadian farmers questioned on the launch RR Wheat,

"I was not in favour of GM Wheat and I went to some meetings to voice the concern that I wish they would not continue doing this. Because two-fold: the Canadian Wheat Board that markets a lot of our RedSpring Wheat and wheat's in general, all of their customers were saying that they did not want to have this

^δ The Council of Canadians is an NGDO committed to building a stronger civil society through research, education work and campaigns. See <http://www.canadians.org/> for more information.

wheat. So why would you produce something that you know your customers did not want to buy, that would be just cutting your own throats. At the same time I guess I'm not afraid of GM wheat as far as food safety, I just think for us as farmers and the farming industry agronomically I don't think its what we need right now, we already have RR Canola and Liberty Canola is the same thing but RR Canola you spray the RR on the Canola and the Wheat and you're not going to kill either one so when you've got two species that are resistant to the same chemical it just creates more of a problem for us as to how we're going to deal with volunteers. On our farm we zero till, we don't do any tillage to try to kill any weeds, we do it all by spraying, and most of that is glyphosate, which is Roundup. And the CFGB project we've been doing now, we are all on the same page as far as zero till, so the weed control is done by chemicals...It would just mean having to put on another chemical to eliminate the volunteers which would increase the cost of the bottom line and make the bottom line even tighter and we just didn't need that." Farmer/Constituent

An environmental scientist that has been working with farmers from across Western Canada to analyze and risks associated with GM crops, offered this insight on the effects of biotech,

"Farmers are having problems with the [GM] crops but they're not communicating it, by their very nature farmers are entrepreneurial, interested in managing their own land, they take pride in managing their own piece of the pie, so if there's a problem on their land they go out and take care of it - that's what being a farmer is. So there's this complete disconnect between industry and the government and the understanding on how farmers actually operate. So they [GoC] set up all this infrastructure to assess risk and it's bogus, it doesn't work, its not set up with the producers in mind, whether or not that's intentional is another thing, it simply doesn't work." Environmental Scientist

While the number of countries producing food and plant biotechnology continue to rise and fall, so does the concern over GMOs. Farmer and consumer support is an indication

of the challenges that GM products face. Examples of missing collaboration from main players in the food industry, the US, less industrialised nations and Europe make impact the Agribusiness industry and could represent a trend away from GM products. Finding new channels through which to advance its products is a continuing activity of the industry.

Furthermore, during meetings with Agricores United and Monsanto Canada, two of the five Agribusiness companies providing inputs to the Growing Projects, engaging in dialogue over their donations to the CFGB and the implications of biotech globally was challenging.⁹ During the meeting with Agricores United, the national public relations person, however nervous, provided information as to Agricores United's contributions to the CFGB, while having little knowledge of programming. Furthermore, she spoke to the corporation's activities and products in Canada but she was unaware of the transnational activities of the company. When asked about the safety of GM products, the PR person reiterated the statements found on their website.⁸

The interview with Monsanto Canada had a similar tone. Interestingly, the PR representative for Monsanto Canada is the former Director of Communications for the CFGB. Her knowledge on CFGB operations was extensive and she discussed the importance in supporting the Growing Projects to assist the CFGB in its work. The representative also talked about the activities of Monsanto Canada within the country but had no knowledge about its workings outside of North America. Concerning Monsanto Canada's international commitment to end hunger in the developing world through research and development of GM products, she remarked that it seemed like "a good idea".

⁹ It is interesting to note that at Agricores United, the physical structures of the building were highly secure; in order to meet the national PR representative, I was escorted to a floor that is protected from the public. Also during the meeting with Monsanto, I had arranged to meet with the geneticist, however I received another phone call informing me that the national PR representative would also be joining. I was informed to meet at a restaurant rather than their office building. During the meeting, the geneticist did very little talking, and what he did offer was ill-mannered comments about farmers that were backwards if they could not appreciate the value of GM crops.

⁸ See <http://www.agricoresunited.com/index.html> for more information on Agricores United

The representatives of the Agribusiness companies were pleased with their relationship with the Growing Projects and did not foresee changing the funding arrangement in the future. Though they skilfully described the advantages concerning GM products and their safety, they expressed little knowledge of the proliferation of GM products to other parts of the world and on issues involving GMOs in developing countries.

7.3 Canadian NGDOs & the Question of Biotechnology

The FSPG work to improve food security in developing countries, have mixed views towards GMOs in food aid and otherwise. A program officer from one of the members of the FSPG describes the mixed perspective of the working group,

“The FSPG is torn on biotech issues, there are some groups [that support biotech], well CFGB is part of that, and then there are some groups who are opposed and some that don’t know. So this working group [on biotech] is very much outside the work of the FSPG, we issued an invitation to all members who wanted to join, but it’s for people who are very clearly critical. It’s a group that’s working to change that policy.” Program officer, NGDOI

The reason for the high degree of disagreement and lack of sector-wide support over GM is because of the convoluted nature of the issue. Therefore an initiative was launched by some members of the FSPG, to host an international event pertaining to the impact of biotechnology.

“Voices from the South”

In July 2004, a group of NGDOs from the FSPG organized an international conference on biotech. The National Farmers Union, Inter Pares, the ECT Group, with the assistance of other Canadian NGDOs and farmer groups formed another working group, this time against agricultural biotechnology in less industrialised countries. The *Working Group on Canadian Science and Technology Policy* emerged out of an awareness that there had been no concerted effort on behalf of civil society or NGDOs to try to implement

Canada's international policy on agricultural biotech. Particular NGDOs had prepared individual policy development initiatives, but nothing had taken place on a sector-wide level. This move was an attempt to lay the groundwork for systematic engagement with diverse government officials working on biotech issues in less industrialised nations.

“We wanted to have all people who were on the same page to work together concertedly to try to stop Canada aggressively promoting Ag-biotech in the South. Especially as a quote unquote cure for hunger, because there's a myth that GMOs can feed the world and definitely we've seen it in our international work, that it's the opposite and it undermines all kinds of livelihood systems etc. So we wanted to come together to change Canada's policy in that area because we knew that [Government of] Canada actively travels internationally to try to promote a) biotech for agriculture and b) Canada's regulatory system which as you probably know doesn't differentiate between GMOs and non.” Program officer, NGDOI

The aim of the biotech group was to bring forth the way in which biotechnology is affecting farmers from less industrialised nations. The initiative began with a series of meetings with most of the GoC agencies and departments dealing with Ag-biotech. CIDA, IDRC, Natural Resources Canada, Health Canada, International Trade, Canadian Biotechnology Secretariat, and Agriculture Canada met with the biotech group and presented the type of work they were doing globally. A development officer from one of the key organising NGDOs explains the rationale behind arranging the event,

“Generally the idea was to gather the info and secondly build relationships with these government departments. We're not on this antagonistic path, we just feel that they probably haven't had a chance to speak with those that are most affected by their decisions. So through these meetings that is exactly what came out, we were quite sure that that was what was going to happen but we still needed to go through the process, and it came out that in fact there has been very, very little dialogue with farmers in developing countries on how they feel about these technologies and so out of that we together identified with the

government agencies that we needed to put together a series of events structured around one mid-high level government roundtable, where we would invite top people from Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, to come to Canada for one day of intense dialogue to meet with these various departments.” Program officer, NGDO1

The second phase of the initiative was major capacity building events between governmental agencies, NGDOs and invited representatives from less industrialised nations, to take place in cities across Canada. However, the informant describes the resistance of government agencies in admitting they are involved in the proliferation of biotech around the world, and the difficulties in persuading them to take part in the activities,

“In terms of Agriculture Canada...we met with them yesterday and it was sooo challenging. They basically lied to us at the beginning by saying that the amount of stuff they do on GE is extremely limited and ‘why would you want to ask us anything?’ And I pointed out that I had been in India, when there was an Industry Canada and Agriculture Canada trade delegation on biotech with the head of AgWest Biotech and other companies there to promote Canadian biotech at the Ecrisot Centre in India...And then I invited her to the roundtable and she can’t make it because she’s in Iran doing risk assessment capacity building on GE! They’re working in tons of countries on this issue, and what they kept saying which is very true and candid, is that the reason why they’re saying they don’t do anything is because Industry Canada is taking the lead on all GE technology development and marketing. And they said ‘you know you really should talk to Industry Canada, Monsanto comes to mind.’ yea it comes to mind for us too! And so when this meeting was over, this woman from Agriculture Canada, who is their senior advisor on technology and development, got up and walked out, did not say good-bye, shake my hand, nothing. She literally got up and walked out of the room. We were treated very shabbily. The other person who was there is the guy who does the biodiversity protocol, the Carategena protocol, the FAO negotiations, the Convention on

Genetic Resources, he's the guy who does all the negotiations at Agriculture Canada, and he was atleast more civil, and more effective frankly, by actually chatting with us, he drew out information on what we were doing, that frankly if I were in their position I would want to know... So our experience there has not been the best, but I do think that I was able to convey to them that this roundtable was an unprecedented and quite a high calibre opportunity and basically they have to send people. So I think we can be sure that people from all these departments will come, but it's getting the right people, and we're going to so much trouble to organise this huge amount of work and all these countries, so the main thing is to make sure the right people are in the room."

Program officer, NGDOI

In light of the difficulties associated with organising the event, on March 9th 2005, *Voices from the South: Biotech Seeds, Food Security & International Development* international roundtable took place. The expressed purpose of the event was that GoC officials that were present could hear various points of views, above all, from farmers from the different corners of the globe.² A series of public meetings were held: in Saskatoon with NFU; in Montreal with Social Justice, Greenpeace, and Paysanne Equitaire; in Quebec with the Assembly Nationale and their Standing Committee on Agriculture; and a day long roundtable in Ottawa. There were nine international people invited, four of which were farmers and the rest members of civil society and scientists.

Most GoC agencies were less than enthusiastic about the international roundtable. Days before the event, a governmental department had expressed concern over the high number of officials attending and the interactive format.²⁶³ Though the roundtable discussions were off the record, they requested that a GoC official open the event with a presentation of Canada's position on biotechnology. While the GoCs requests had been fulfilled, on the day of the event over 30% of confirmed government officials did not show up (12 in total) compromising the format of the roundtable discussions. These

² For the complete report see the Inter Pares website at <http://www.interpares.ca/en/publications/reportsandpresentations.php> [accessed 01/11/07]

actions are in light of the fact that most of the event was funded by two of the government agencies (IDRC and the Secretariat at CIDA).

Though the support of the GoC was less than satisfactory, the event brought forth the concerns over biotech from small-scale farmers and scientists from less industrialised nation, as well as some of the economic and environmental challenges they face. A farmer from India summed up the perspective of small-scale farmers in the following quote,

“It is the policies of governments, our governments particularly, which have driven people to hunger, not the farming practices...Why are 10, 000 farmers so desperate? It is not because we cannot produce enough. If at the national level India is food secure and there is still hunger, we must locate the issue of food security elsewhere – at the household and community level. It is from this perspective that food security becomes food sovereignty - where farmers depend on local production, storage and distribution. On a day to day basis agriculture offers us multiple securities: food, nutrition, fuel wood, livelihood, ecological security. All are embedded within our crop production systems and the moment you fragment them, divorce them, agriculture will fall on its face. It is from this perspective that we see genetic engineering.” V. Satheesh, farmer in India²⁶⁴

Though it was a general critique of biotech and only indirectly related to food aid, the message from the roundtable discussions was that the push for biotech, in any form, has the potential and is leading to hardship for farmers in less industrialised countries. The CFGB was not present at this event.

The question over the appropriateness of GMO in general is a large issue, never mind the proliferation of GMO through food aid. As a result, Canadian NGDOs for the most part are keeping their distance from GMO products in their development activities, as the many unresolved and negative consequences are uncertain to outweigh the positive attributes of the products. Besides political, economic and health concerns, the question

of GMOs involves issues concerning the environment, centring on the dismantling of local agricultural systems. Consequently, the CFGB is positioned in what can be considered a challenging spot apropos even questioning the appropriateness of GMOs in their programming practices.

²²⁸ Monsanto. Our Pledge. Para. 5

http://www.monsanto.com/monsanto/layout/our_pledge/monsanto_pledge.asp [accessed 01/04/2008]

²²⁹ C. Runge & L.A. Jackson. "Labelling, Trade and Genetically Modified Organisms." *Journal of World Trade* 34:1 (2000) 111-122, p.112.

²³⁰ Challenger 2001, p. 10

²³¹ "Seeding a New Industry". *Technology Review*. Cambridge: Sep/Oct 101:5 (1998) p.39.

²³² Stephen, Handelman. "A Food Fight That Affects Us All" in *Toronto Star Website*, 24 February (2004)

http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&cid=1077535862530&call_pageid=968256290204&col=968350116795 [10 March 2004] (no longer available)

²³³ C. James. "Preview: Global Status of Commercialized Transgenic Crops: 2003: Executive Summary." *International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications* (ISAAA) No.30 (2003) p.4 <http://www.isaaa.org/> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²³⁴ "European GMO Campaign" *Friends of the Earth Europe*. Para. 2 <http://mail.foeeurope.org/GMOs/old%20files/Contamination.htm> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²³⁵ James, op. cit.

²³⁶ James, op. cit., para.10

²³⁷ For examples see: A. Mittal. [online conference speech] "Biotechnology and the Third World: A Question of Social Morality." *Food First Institute for Food and Development Policy* June 5 (2003)

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- ²⁴⁹ S. Felix. “Organic Foods Boom: Consumer Demand is Driving Grocers to Make Space for Organics.” *Canadian Grocer*. Toronto (June 2000) 114:5, p.38.
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- ²⁵¹ Mittal 2003, para. 14
- ²⁵² Bihar Bans Monsanto From Selling Seeds. *CropChoice News*. April 8, 2003 [online article] <http://www.cropchoice.com/leadstry7608.html?recid=1571> [accessed 01/04/2008].
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CHAPTER 8 – Donor III: Government of Canada

“Very early on, they went and got matching grants from CIDA, which has had an impact because then you begin to get drawn into the government policy framework.. then you have to operate within the government policy framework. But there was this sense that these were resources that could be made available for relief and development.” CEO, CFGB1

The final actor involved with the CFGB is the Government of Canada. Canada is one of the major food producing and donating countries in the world and it is second only to the US in having the world’s most restrictive procurement rules for food aid.²⁶⁵ CIDA has been providing funding to the CFGB since it was first established. The agency accords the CFGB resources through 3-year grant agreements. The CFGB receives its CIDA funds from two different divisions within the agency. The Canadian Partnership Branch provides the organisation with a small amount of funds to carry out specific projects, however the core of the budget is allocated through the Programme Against Hunger Malnutrition and Disease (PAHMD).

The allocation of CIDA funds is based on the member agencies project proposals (for programming and operational costs) that qualify for CIDA matching funds. The Grant Agreement is based on a 4:1 match to public donations, to a maximum of \$16 million per year. Since 2000, CIDA has been providing the \$16 million maximum to the CFGB.

In 2004/05, a proposal was submitted to attract additional resources from the existing CIDA funding agreement, but it was declined. The CFGB proposed a new initiative in agricultural development that was linked to a prior, yet short-lived, government interest in promoting rural development through agriculture. In spite of the fact that CIDA received an 8% increase in its international aid budget that year, the agency informed the CFGB that those funds had been allocated for specific initiatives. As a consequence, the CFGB resolved that they needed to be more creative in their proposals as the traditional responsive type funding programmes are not receiving attention. By focusing on

developing common types of activities with local partners and members they can uniquely contribute to broader food security efforts.

As the CFGB receives the majority of its resources from the Canadian government, it is subject to many of the priorities of the GoC. As the GoC is taking part in discussions on food aid policy and programming in many different institutional environments, including the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the *Food Aid Convention*, the discussion on *Good Humanitarian Donorship*, the development of *Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food* the effect, not to mention the pressures from within the country, the result is such that the CFGBs actions can be interpreted as an extension of the Canadian governments foreign and national policies.

The next section is, first and foremost, an illustration of the institutional environment enveloping the Canadian government. An awareness of the national and international agreements Canada has signed onto is necessary in recognising the contending forces playing on the organisational structure and practices of the CFGB. The chapter is divided into two main sections beginning with: 1) the global backdrop of hunger, i.e. the international environment; 2) followed by a closer look at the national arrangements. In both parts, the range of influences stemming from the environment will be presented in relation to the impact they have on the CFGB.

8.1 Canada's International Commitments to End Hunger

International Food Aid Convention

The importance of the convention relates to the amount of food aid Canada must provide annually. This has significant implications on the operations of the CFGB. In 1967, the Convention was first created as a means to increasing global food security and to enable, most effectively, the international community to better respond to emergencies. Parties to the Food Aid Convention commit to providing a predetermined amount of food aid annually, with wheat as the major commodity, comprising 90% of the donor

commitment. The Food Aid Convention has been re-signed five times and the current version was adopted in 1999 and expires in 2007.

The amount of food aid commitments provided by donors has fluctuated considerably over the years. The minimum food aid commitments took a sizeable increase in 1980 but in 1995 were reduced dramatically. The last negotiations in 1999, committed Canada to providing 420,000 metric tons of food annually. Canada has fluctuated from year to year in its commitments, and at times has carried over an annual deficit.

The International Food Aid Committee, to which all donors belong, agreed that according to the Food Aid Convention, the objectives should result in:

Figure 9. Objectives of Food Aid Convention

- (a) Making appropriate levels of food aid available on a predictable basis, as determined by the provisions of this Convention;
- (b) Encouraging members to ensure that the food aid provided is aimed particularly at the alleviation of poverty and hunger of the most vulnerable groups, and is consistent with agricultural development in those countries,
- (c) Including principles for maximising the impact, the effectiveness and quality of the food aid provided as a tool in support of food security; and,
- (d) Providing a framework for cooperation, coordination and information-sharing among members on food aid related matters to achieve greater efficiency in all aspects of food aid operations and better coherence between food aid and other policy instruments.²⁶⁶

However, the Food Aid Convention has long been a target of criticism. It appears that the availability of food aid is controlled by the world grain market rather than actual need.²⁶⁷ Donors have been consistent in fulfilling the minimum supply obligations; however there seems to be a detrimental juxtaposition concerning low cereal prices and high availability of aid.²⁶⁸ When prices fall, donors, especially the US, turn their agricultural surpluses into aid contributions. The problem lies in the fact that, often, aid in these periods, has been shown to cause harm on local economies by distorting local markets.²⁶⁹

In the December 2005 session, the Food Aid Committee discussed the bulk of its problems. The spotlight was on the US policy of buying up agricultural surpluses and distributing them around the world in the form of food aid. It was remarked that this form of subsidy distorts trade, making it a matter for the WTO, however the US persistently refused to discuss this practice during the sessions. Consequently, the Committee has resolved to defer the negotiations to update the Convention until the WTO has made a decision on US food aid.²⁷⁰

There are a number of other issues surrounding the re-negotiation of the Food Aid Convention. Some critics argue that if the Convention is to remain credible, it must be more accurately represented in the practice of providing food aid.²⁷¹ A particular point that emerged was that actual needs are not being determined or monitored appropriately, and could be centralised within the United Nations. The Food Aid Convention requires that food aid, as much as possible, be channelled through the WFP, rather than bilateral aid. There is also a concern over the dependence of the WFP on US grain supplies, as they constitute more than half of WFP resources. If it were to receive more money instead of grain, the WFP would be in a position to purchase more of its supplies in the affected regions. Representation is another controversial issue, and whether NDGOs and recipient countries should be included in the deliberations. A further issue for deliberation is whether the focus should be on food aid as an instrument to ending hunger, or if it should be changed to confront the problem of food insecurity instead.

The issues affecting the Food Aid Convention range from the level and nature of the donor commitments, monitoring and enforcement of commitments, the objectives of the Convention and representation on the FAC governing body.

World Food Summits

Canada was present at the first World Food Summit in 1975 and made a commitment to ending world hunger. However, in two decades little had transpired in terms of reducing hunger and malnutrition, the FAO launched the second World Food Summit in 1996. Two key documents emerged from the Summit - a framework to achieve universal food

security and a plan of action. The revised Rome Declaration on World Food Security states:

“We, the Heads of State and Government, or our representatives, gathered at the World Food Summit at the invitation of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.” Rome Declaration on World Food Security, 1996

The Declaration is a commitment by members to halve the number of chronically undernourished people by 2015 that would be monitored by the FAO. The aim is that member shall operationalise their commitment to the Declaration through a number of targets, outlined in the World Food Summit Plan of Action. This action plan includes a number of key commitments,

“Food security exists 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 an healthy life. Food security means: ensuring that sufficient food is available; maintaining relatively stable supplies; allowing access to food for those in need of it.” FAO

objectives and specific targets for states and NGDOs to achieve food security. The core commitments centre on: enhancing the situation of the landless; securing access rights for women; promoting agricultural output; and supporting and promoting sustainable agriculture. While many of the recommendations are needed one of the main critiques was that they appear sound, they presuppose that “hunger eradication depends on output and harvest..[thereby focusing]..too heavily on promoting traditional agricultural subsidies and agricultural exporting enterprises”.²⁷² The issue that hunger is a rural phenomenon that affects small farmers was not a central theme.

The continuing lack of focus of the WFS and Plan of Action indicates that the CFGB, and the members of the FSPG, will have a difficult task of advancing rural development as a means to achieve hunger alleviation.

Another commitment that emerged from the WFS was for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, was “to define better the rights related to food in article 11 of the [International] Covenant [on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights] and to propose ways to implement and realise these rights as a means to achieving the commitments and objectives of the World Food Summit, taking into account the possibility of formulating voluntary Guidelines for food security for all”.²⁷³ Article 11 is defined as,

*‘The right to food has three components: the right to be free from hunger, the right to adequate food and the right to water’.*²⁷⁴ Article 11

The Human Rights Encyclopaedia states that notion of “Adequate Food” is based on the premise that: “states have an obligation to ensure, at the very least that people do not starve..that people should have physical and economic access to food that is adequate in quantity and quality..it must also be culturally acceptable and it must be produced in manner that is environmentally and socially sustainable..and that the provision should not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights.”²⁷⁵ States that adopt the right to food are then obliged to protect people from starvation, thereby ensuring that they have adequate quantity and quality of foods to ensure a healthy life. This resulted with the formation of a definition of the Right to Food and a set of Voluntary Guidelines to be implemented by member states.

The next major global event that Canada took part in was in 2000, when heads of states came together in New York to adopt the 2000 Millennium Declaration. Among other things it was the verification of their commitment “... to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015. ”.²⁷⁶ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reaffirmed the commitment to halving hunger through development agenda, once again endorsed by the heads of States, namely Canada. The first goal of “Reducing Extreme Income and Poverty Deprivation” is a reproduction the initial WFS target, and would continue to be monitored by the FAO.²⁷⁷

Despite the global endorsement, the Declaration has been criticised for its vagueness and the MDGs scrutinized for their impracticability.²⁷⁸ The goal of halving the number of hungry appears too ambitious to be taken seriously considering the global track record in lowering the number of hungry from the second WFS, and once again the non-binding nature of the Millennium obligations.

In 2002, due to the inadequacies I'm fulfilling the commitments surrounding the second WFS and the MDGs, the WFS Five Years Later was initiated in hopes of putting the battle for hunger eradication back on track. It resulted in the formation of an Intergovernmental Working Group to develop a set of Voluntary Guidelines to support assist members nations in satisfying the right to adequate food within their borders, as outlined in a WFS Plan of Action. The purpose of the Guidelines were to provide practical assistance to member states that "cover the full range of actions to be considered by governments at the national level in order to build an enabling environment for people to feed themselves in dignity and to establish appropriate safety nets for those who are unable to do so".²⁷⁹

Experts and civil society actors from approximately 1000 organisations and associations joined forces with the FAO to develop a Draft Code of Conduct on the Right to Adequate Food.²⁸⁰ By November 2004, the guidelines on the Right to Food were adopted by 187 of the FAO member states. These guidelines are an international legal instrument that serves the purpose of detailing the obligations of and providing assistance on how states can implement the Right to Food. They propose a comprehensive strategy focusing are areas such as economic development, market systems, agriculture, nutrition, education, and emergency measures in food crises.²⁸¹ Canada was a signatory to the guidelines that position the alleviation of hunger within a rights-based framework.

With that said, the GoC has come under a lot of criticism over the years concerning their lack of follow through when it comes to international commitments related to reducing the number of hungry. In the next passage, a Canadian social scientist in food security outlines the state of Canada's international actions,

“Again I think that because of the paradigmatic myopia they employ, they actually sign onto things thinking it’s okay but then they discover it isn’t, and then they don’t do anything. There’s this huge disconnect, it’s a combination of incompetence in the Prime Ministers Office that goes on within the civil service system. Again from the outside, our assumption is that these are decisions or rather they are a product of large political exigencies, but a lot of time it isn’t that - it’s just like ‘oh god what’s that? We’re not going to move on that file Canada signed onto’. Goodale the AgMinister was a star at the World Food Summit, and what has Canada done since then - virtually nothing. And they feel no compulsion to. The worry is that increasingly Canada doesn’t feel the need to fulfil its international obligations because it has this long history to signing on, and being seen as an international star, and then it doesn’t deliver the goods. Same thing happened at the World Food Summit, or the International Conference on Nutrition in 1992. When you read the reports for the Action Plans on that website, they’re largely just reporting on what the NGOs are telling them, plus a few things that the federal government has done with are all sorts of high level things which may or may not have an impact on food security....so they [government] cobble together these reports and the staff at the International Programs Branch two months before the reporting deadline to the FAO, and starts calling around to all the NGOs frantically asking is anything happening because they have nothing themselves, while all they’re really concerned about is meeting the FAO reporting requirements. They’re not actually concerned about doing anything. But even now, because the reports expose their inactivity, there’s even some fear that they’ll stop doing the reports. There’s a sort of façade of being an international leader but no actual delivery, there’s really no parliamentary oversight in the implementation process, this process is left up to the civil service, but the civil service doesn’t deliver unless someone in the political system says ‘hey what happened about such and such’ and most time the political people don’t have will, or capacity or the resources to follow what’s happening at the civil service level, so there’s no follow up. So in that sense what largely happens in Canada is a product of our government system, which is that increasingly the parliamentary processes are irrelevant

and the authority is basically centred around the Prime Ministers office and the Privy Councils Office and if the PMO and the PCO don't think it's a priority, then nothing happens, and of course the PMO is only going to deal with so many issues during a PMs term." Social scientist on food security1

The GoC is generally disconnected from its international commitments. Rather than being engaged in supporting, monitoring and evaluating its international achievements with the assistance of NGDOs, its relationship is a last minute effort to appear involved. Its struggle is represented by its artificial relationship to the NGDO sector.

GoC a Force in Global Trade?

Canada as a middle-income industrialised nation plays a substantial role in global trade talks. The position the GoC holds at these talks has serious repercussions not only for the Canadian economy but also for international development assistance programme. While trade is a significant element in ensuring the continued growth and vitality of the Canadian nation, decision over trade issues have potential to undermine international development efforts.

When the World Trade Organisation was established in 1995, the purpose of creating an international trade system, bringing industrialised and less industrialized countries together, was to create a more balanced platform for global trade. At the fourth Ministerial Meeting in 2001, known as the "Doha Development Round", heads of states, including Canada, came together in reinforcing the notion that support for international trade and international development goals must go hand in hand.

In the 2001 round, an international treaty entitled the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) was a key subject of the negotiations. This proposal, endorsed by the main donor countries, came into force in 1995 and was premised on a series of measures that would reduce tariffs and safeguard the export of highly subsidized commodities from industrialised countries to reduce trade-distorting subsidies in the international market, thereby improving market access. Critics of the AoA argue that it reduces tariff protections for small-scale farmers in developing countries, while allowing governments

in highly industrialized nations to provide enormous subsidies to their farmers. Although Canada attempted to argue for a general limit on the amount of subsidies received by farmers, it nonetheless approved the agreement. In a report by the FSPG on *Canada's Trade and Development*, it reasons that by accepting a trade agreement that maintains the depression in world prices of production, the GoC has underscored the discrepancies in its pledge to reduce poverty and hunger.²⁸²

The position of the GoC on the Agreement on Agriculture is a curious one. By supporting continued subsidies in the USA and the EU not only undercuts the income of small farmers in the South but also seriously affects Canadian farmers that had their subsidies withdrawn in the 1980s. What's more, the Canadian farming sector has been in an acute farm income crisis for over a decade, with farmers not earning a viable income in light of expanded trade and higher yields.⁵

A year after the fourth Ministerial Meeting in Doha, Qatar, a news release from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation read 'Canada's Position at the WTO puts World's Poor Farmers and Hungry at Greater Risk'.²⁸³ Since then, Canada's position during trade talks has not changed significantly. The affect of Canada's policies at the talks often reflect the position of both the EU and the US in regards to maintaining domestic support and export subsidies in the North while requiring Southern countries to continuously lower their tariffs.

A pro-development proposal, formulated by developing countries, was first proposed in 2002. This was a set of interim measures that would allow low income countries to protect their economy and the farming sector through countervail measures during the process of reducing agricultural subsidies. Many Canadian civil society groups applauded the pro-development proposal, Oxfam Canada released a statement espousing

⁵ A number of factors have placed pressure on the Canadian farming sector since the mid-90s. Farmers have been suffering an ongoing farm income crisis in light of increasing exports, the consolidation of transnational corporations responsible for supplying and buying from Canadian farmers, and issues such as the threat of avian flu and mad cow disease affecting Canada-US border relations. A variety of reports and empirical data on the state of Canada's farms can found on the National Farmers Union Canada website, see in particular the report *Solving the Farm Crisis* for a current description and recommendations for Canadian farmers at www.nfu.ca

the benefits of levelling the trade system, “Trade can help end world hunger but only if unbalanced rules are righted. Canada should stand with developing countries in the effort to ban export subsidies, regulate export credits and food aid, and end food dumping.”²⁸⁴

Prior to the sixth Ministerial Meeting of the WTO in Cancun, the CFGB and Oxfam Canada jointly released a publication urging the GoC to commit to the measure found in the Development Box. This would mean supporting five key proposals or ‘fair trade rules’:

1. As long as high US and EU subsidies distort trade, developing countries must have the right to apply tariffs on agricultural imports that are sold at less than the cost of domestic production.
2. Developing countries must have the right to designate a limited number of non-exported staple commodities as exempt from further tariff reduction.
3. Developing countries must have the flexibility to use domestic support expenditures to increase production for local consumption.
4. Farmer-controlled marketing structures, including single-desk exporters, must be retained as an option for developing country farmers
5. Developed countries should make binding commitments to support agricultural development and provide appropriate food assistance to Least Developed and Net Food Importing Developing Countries.

This however had little effect on Canada’s role during the talks.

In addition to international agreements such as the Food Aid Convention of key food-exporting nations, other wide-ranging food aid governance institutions, such as the WTO and the UN agencies, are also characterized by intersecting mandates, debatable representation of stakeholders, and concerns over legitimacy and decision-making procedures. All of these international factors lead into and influence the Canadian government and their approaches towards hunger eradication. Yet, just as a significant as the international dynamics in shaping the way hunger is perceived and tackled - so is the institutional environment within Canada.

The CFGB is aware that the future of providing food aid largely depends on the discussions taking place at the international level. Consequently, to determine the survival of the organisation, they have begun to monitor and in some cases, have attempted to take part in, the various discussions involving the re-conceptualisation and the transformation of policies and practices relating to food aid. However, in addition to the international environment, the national context is also essential in ensuring the continued existence of the CFGB. The following section hones in on the Canadian federal government and its national commitments related to hunger alleviation.

8.2 Canada's National Commitments to End Hunger

Canada's role and policies associated with hunger alleviation has changed dramatically over the past 50 years making it increasingly difficult for the CFGB to program and access funds for food aid. Although Canada started out as one of the primary global food aid donors in the 1950s, it has consistently decreased its commitment to food aid largely due to changes in the political and bureaucratic makeup, which have also resulted in ideological shifts. More specifically, the symbolic state of food aid today can be explained by some key factors – the GoC has shifted values in food-based approaches to nutrition-based approaches to end hunger, the agency favours large-scale development programmes over small-scale ones, the need to demonstrate results has increased and that food aid is not associated with the Canadian farm lobby.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) of the federal government is responsible for Canadian official development assistance and providing the bulk of the CFGBs budget. CIDA has gone through many political, ideological and economic upheavals in the past twenty years that has led to a difficult environment for NGDOs. Furthermore, international conventions concerning reducing the number of hungry, international trade agreements about agriculture, and the national political climate in general, has each had an significant effect on the relations between the government and NGDOs working to end hunger.

Politics Are Half the Battle

The CFGB has not been highly successful in generating political influence in government to attract new funds for food aid programmes. One of the reasons for this is due to the high level of insecurity in the bureaucratic structure and a fluctuating budget for international development assistance.

For a brief period in 2003, CIDA was committed to promoting sustainable agricultural livelihoods. This was the year that the honourable Sheila Whelan, the daughter of a former agricultural champion, became the Minister of International Development. One of the first statements that Minister Whelan released was in the promotion of rural agriculture to increase development in the less industrialised nations. At this point, the CFGB engaged once again in discussions with CIDA, arguing that purchasing food aid locally could assist in developing well functioning, local markets in recipient countries. At this point in time the CFGB was optimistic that changes were on the rise, until, due to a political mistake in her ministerial placement, shortly thereafter Minister Whelan was removed from her posting.

In 2004, the liberal government suffered great setbacks from a series of scandals involving many liberal Ministers and politicians. Due to the uncertainty in the political environment, Ministers were unwilling to go to bat for NGOs in their support for specific policies; rather the focus remained on the programme and criteria levels. On top of this, another event happened that year when the Liberal government initiated an International Policy Review. This plan included reviewing the work of many agencies including CIDA; causing great concern over the future of the agency. Discussions on the possibility of merging CIDA into Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade were deliberated, but in the end it was dropped.

By 2005, the Liberal government lost its footing to the Conservatives who defeated them with a minority government. The international platform of the current Conservative Party concentrates on national security and free trade, with little interest in international development assistance. Consequently, the CFGB decided to wait before initiating talks regarding additional resources or changes to the CIDA agreement, until they had a better

understanding of the environment. Over the years, the CFGB had made little headway in the push for more government resources that it could employ for agricultural development and with the recent change to a conservative government, the CFGB efforts to affect change have moved to working other members in civil society, such as the Food Security Policy Group.

The shaky political environment has led to a tightening in CIDA budget, which has meant an increase in competition between NGDOs and the private sector. In addition to the CIDA-funded projects that NGDOs can apply directly for, CIDA has a tendering system where NGDOs as well as for-profit organisations can also bid on contracts. An NGDO Program officer explains how contracts are advertised by CIDA and consequences this has for NGDOs,

“There are many more organisations carrying out the movement of food for aid and development purposes ... the open bidding system of the Canadian government, called Merx, it’s a tendering system. Quite a few years ago aid projects would be put up there as well, CIDA would take about a year and half to decide a project they wanted to do, sometimes they stole ideas from NGDOs, which really ‘cheeses off’ the NGDO community, but let bygones be bygones. So a request for proposal comes up, ‘RSPs’, then you bid on them, in a 30-day period these are the things you need to fulfil, highest mark wins, usually couple million dollars, we’ve bid a couple of times and never been successful. We would have been a perfect fit on one for reproductive health, but we lost it to another agency in Canada that got a higher mark. And I have seen bids put out there for food aid, canola oil to go to fulfil Canada’s commitment to the UN, bids for oil from fish in situations for starvation, bids out for providing these things, so Canada must be sending those. For example, ‘oil to this place, grains, wheat, processed and unprocessed, who can provide for us?’ and they were being put out by CIDA! It may be just that they are looking for providers, and then CIDA packages it and sends it out. It’s also been the Food-For-Work stuff, and the monetisation of wheat, and that’s a type of food aid. Almost every one of the bids goes out in the Merx system for projects ... literally there are fire

trucks from Moosejaw, next to canola oil and then reproductive health projects in Ghana! Then you do a screen by 'international' and see what CIDA has put up on this bidding system. CIDA says we want to be totally impartial about who gets this job, which isn't necessarily the best person who gets the job, only the one that writes the best bid and there are quite a few private companies that are development agencies here in town. For-profit companies, some of them do awesome work, Agriteam their head office is in Calgary but they have a sub-office here in town right next to CIDA, very convenient. And they win a lot of bids, because they're the best at their proposals, and they do, do some good work like NGOs overseas, they kind of look like an NGO but they're not, they're a business ... Agriteam is one of the major, CIDA supports SAVEAH, the giant self employed women's association in India one of the biggest unions in the world, and its all self employed women in this giant union, and CIDA's money runs through Agriteam to SAVEAH, but there's a lot of for-profit businesses that have CIDA contracts to do development work and they take their administrative cut ... it opened up to NGOs being able to bid about 5 or 6 years ago, on these contracts, and that was a whole sea change for us, because we just couldn't compete in terms of presentation on these proposals, it wasn't to say that we didn't have the ability to do the work on these projects."

Program officer, NGO2

This opportunity has not been highly favourable for NGOs. CIDA is perceived to be less concerned with the types of organisations that it is funding for development work, rather who can present their work in the best possible way. For-profit organisations have a distinct advantage over NGOs due to the fact that they have funds to hire professional proposal writers. CIDA's growing relationship with for-profit organisations is yet another constraint affecting NGOs.

Good Humanitarian Donorship?

Many of CIDA official positions on international development have been held up against what is called the *21 Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles*. It is a movement around the world by donor countries to establish good humanitarian principles. The GoC has

taken a lead role, in the movement by hosting a meeting in September 2003, where the principles were peer-evaluated. The following year, most of the official donor countries came together by voluntary means to evaluate their practices.

Tied aid is included among these principles. Traditionally, Europe, Canada and the US have maintained a strong tied aid dimension in their official aid policies. But as of late, Europe and its key food aid donor member states have been quickly moving away from tying their aid to national economies. The US has also made a relatively tiny move in this direction by freeing up roughly US\$300,000,000 for emergency programmes, much to the dismay of the American shipping industry. Dan Maxwell, the Regional director of CARE in East and Central Africa explains the politics surrounding food aid in the US,

“So there is this partial move to untie US food aid, only for emergency purposes, but obviously the agricultural interests are against the idea, although it’s a drop in the ocean as far as their markets are concerned. The people who are against this are the shippers, the shippers have always gotten a huge [amount of the funds]..but American food aid has always had a proviso that 75% has to be shipped on American flag-bearing ships, which amounts to a whopping 40% of the foreign aid budget goes right into shipping and sometimes more than that. The figures we got were 48%; the figures we got were for high bulk shipments. Overall 40% of the Food For Peace budget is straight for shipping.” Dan Maxwell, Deputy Regional Director for CARE East & Central Africa,

Though this illustration was centred on an American picture, the problems associated with tying food aid are also a reality in Canada. The GoC often has blanket policies that extend across areas, where activities that are distinct and unrelated can be located under the same guidelines. The policy on shipping food in-kind is a generic policy within the sphere of international aid. Tying food aid to the national economy is only one form of tied aid.

“There’s a great quote from Dianne Marlot, [former GoC minister] when she was minister, ‘Development aid isn’t about money overseas, development aid is about spending money in Canada.’ Insisting that Canadians are involved, Canadian salaries, even when it wasn’t mandated by the project..” programme officer, NGDO2

Tied aid provides a breeding ground for criticisms against the GoC's development programme by challenging CIDA’s mandate of pursuing sustainable development. Since the beginning of the GoC’s food aid programme in the 1950s, it has been very involved with the monetization of Canadian food products overseas, whether there was an actual need or not.

“The monetisation programmes used to pay for the big projects, they paid for it by converting Canadian wheat to cash and then elaborate transfers to the government and they had to spend it, the government of Bangladesh said well we really didn’t need the wheat, so the Canadian government said - ok take the wheat and sell it and spend it on this..back and forth. Often it ended up being a programme implemented by Care Bangladesh, to pay for the big vulnerable group feedings – women and children, food in the schools, this was about 10 years ago.” Program officer, NGDO2

This also extends to the NGDO sector and other non-profit groups, where CIDA has historically provided small-scale funding to those interested in international development initiatives. The same program officer as above provides an illustration of a type of project CIDA has been involved in that relates to shipping product from Canada,

“When I worked as a consultant for CIDA, and little groups if they could raise \$7,000 dollars, which was the cost of moving a container, CIDA would buy them the milk powder to fill the container or other commodities. I remember a little group in Guyana, if they could raise that money they could ship an entire container of milk powder to Guyana for use in a school. At the time I was thinking this is so colossally inefficient, and so band aid, and this little group –

they raised the money through bake sales - it was that level - I'm thinking this is what CIDA is involved in - \$40,000 worth of milk powder! ... that's moving Canadian products overseas." Program officer, NGDO2

This runs side by side the issue of disposing surplus commodities from Canada to less industrialised countries, rather than the GoC pursuing more cost effective and sustainable means of development programming. In the next quote, a development officer with a Canadian NGDO explains about some of the reasons for and against having food aid tied to the economy,

"..logistically it requires the right kind of market niche, for years we were shipping 1000s of tons to India and trading it for local wheat, you can't ship Canadian wheat there because they grow their own wheat, but you could get substantial amounts of local wheat for relatively fewer tons of Canadian pulses, peas, lentils if the market conditions were right, so that's the only way that shipping from Canada made sense if you could trade it for something else locally - everything else being equal. But if there is an absolute food deficit in whatever the geographical area it is, then you cannot be purchasing locally anyway, you need some additionality to it, but that requires an assessment. So there's no question that it was messy and inefficient. Jim's [CEO CFGB] already probably talked to you about the inefficiency of it, people already don't consume what they get, they take part of it to trade for something else and if nothing else to pay the miller if it didn't come milled." Program officer, NGDO10

In general, the picture of tied aid is relatively negative. Sending over Canadian produce is not only costly, but it also subtracts from the development funds provided to NGDOs. The best-case scenario is that it is useful only after it has been sold and the funds used to purchase local commodities. A key issue with purchasing food aid locally is the reduction of rising ocean freight costs and inland freight costs, which can consume over 40% of the total food aid budget.

Tied Aid

Though the recent CFGB-CIDA negotiations were not successful in acquiring more funds for promoting food security initiatives, change did erupt as a consequence of the tied aid provisions of the agreement. From its inception in 1983 (and until 2006), the CIDA-

“Most Canadian civil society organisations that get funding from CIDA are funding organisations overseas, so they’re not required to buy capital assets or food from Canada, anyway. So tied aid is not really an issue, it’s just the narrow swath of people working on food aid. And in terms of civil society you’re pretty much talking about the CFGB, everyone else has gotten out of it.”
Program officer, NGDO10

CFGB Grant Agreement required the CFGB to source 90% of its food aid from Canada. The remaining 10% of the budget was used on activities that were outside the realm of shipping

Canadian food aid, for example: purchasing food and seeds locally, hunger education, public policy research and a portion of the administrative overhead.

Over the years there have been many situations where the in-kind support was used up, but the need was still very strong. The severity of needs vary from year to year depending on the number and extent of emergencies, though the staff explained that every year the need increases. As discussed above, in those cases the CFGB may match members funds with funds from the General Account, otherwise members use the equity from their account and do a project strictly from their own money.

As discussed prior, problems have traditionally arisen when the 10% local purchase funds were exhausted and resources were low. When a crisis situation ensued, the result was that the CFGB response would be restrained by at least three months and could only deal with the rehabilitation aspects of a disaster. Translated, this means that an ample food supply may be available in a country or region where the disaster occurred, but that the CFGB could not use the CIDA-funds to purchase locally, and instead had to resort to shipping food products from Canada. The response time involved in shipping Canadian commodity overseas impairs the CFGB from responding quickly to humanitarian crises, not to mention the loss of almost half of its budget to shipping costs. Having a tied aid food aid programme also brings up questions surrounding the shipment of GMOs through food aid.

There are a number of social, political and economic arguments for why it was in the best interest of the GoC to untie the food aid procurements. In 1998, the CFGB began proposing that the procurement restrictions be reduced from 90% to 50% of food commodities originating in Canada. They petitioned for the remaining 50% of CIDA-funded food aid to be purchased in the recipient country. However, many NGDOs in the sector were not satisfied with the CFGBs pursuit of a 50:50 grant, rather they argued that the agreement should untie aid 100%,

“The CFGBs position as I understand it, is that they want to see an increase in Canada’s willingness to provide cash to third party countries up to 50% of the total amount that is available. And other groups such as the NFU would argue that it should be untied 100%, and we should get it from where we can best get it from and if possible get it from small farmers in country or neighbouring countries. So it’s that kind of policy difference in a sense that I would certainly agree with the NFU position, that we should be going for 100% free and flexible funding.” Executive Director, NGDO3

However, though there was much discussion on the topic, the CFGB did not change its request from a 50:50 adjustment to the agreement.

Beginning in 1998 and for the next 7 years, no changes were made to the original Grant Agreement. But on December 26, 2004 when the shorelines in Southeast Asia were hit by massive sea waves of a Tsunami, killing over 150,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands of people in desperate need of food, a climate for change was set in motion. The Canadian public responded hand-over-fist with donations to be spent on food aid for the survivors. The CFGB took advantage of the high profile opportunity to complain to the media that the “archaic federal rule limiting how government aid money is spent will prevent them from feeding the neediest victims of the southern Asian tsunami.”²⁸⁵ The CFGB petitioned the GoC to untie Canadian aid so they may purchase more food locally, to be more effective in responding to the disaster. This resulted in the International Co-operation Minister Aileen Carroll swiftly assigning cabinet members to the issue.

The Times They Are A-Changin'

In 2005, a new agreement was finalised that allows the CFGB to spend up to 50% of CIDA funds on local purchases and/or nutrition programming. In other words, the CFGB now has the opportunity to use 50% of its budget on local purchases.

The discussion surrounding untying the aid to a 50:50 agreement is largely in relation to freeing up more funds for relief aid. This new agreement provides the CFGB with the opportunity to assist their Members in responding at the onset of a disaster, rather than being confined to the rehabilitation end of it. A member of the field staff in CFGB's member church agencies East Africa discusses the attitudes surrounding untying aid,

"..Canadian constituents understand relief and want "Member in Field1" to do relief and they want to give their relief money to "Member in Field1". And I think it's the same with the Mennonites, I think Mennonites understand development a little bit better but I've heard from other members of CFGB they say 'people understand relief better than they understand development'50-50 that gives me the shivers....that would just be amazing!" Members in Field1

Though, historically the greatest concern by the CFGB staff has been over the restraints imposed by the original agreement, the new agreement also poses some problems. The GoC agreed to the changes in the Grant Agreement, on the condition that the remaining 50% of the budget must still be used in sending Canadian food and nutrition-related projects. However, there is another problem associated with the new agreement that permits increased local purchases – just that – increased local purchases. Typically the only people who have been regularly making purchases have been the WFP, as they have a longer history of receiving funds for this purpose. On a side note, this phenomenon has also recently occurred in the US, with USAID setting aside \$300million for NGOs to access for local purchases of food commodities during emergency.

Though untying aid has been a key objective of the CFGB, there are concerns over the potential havoc on markets, which are unprepared for a sudden upsurge of buyers during

an emergency. Ben Watkins, the program advisor for WFP Kenya, a region that is often plagued by natural disasters, comments on the sensitivity of the markets in East Africa in relation to the WFP local purchase initiatives,

“We had a discussion with the regional trade information network, I used to work for them, it’s a regional paper and it’s talking about the regional trade system. And they say that it’s our buying more than it’s our importing that can be disruptive, because we can buy large amounts, we may be one of the single largest buyers on the Kenyan market, and we are the largest on the Ugandan market. So what happens is that it may just take a small change in market conditions for us to decide to buy here or there, so which has repercussions because of the quantities that we’re buying. Unlike the millers, they have more steady demand, which is more predictable, our demand can be unsteady. So these are the things that people don’t generally realise about food aid, if you take these kind of issues into account you can get a very different view, it can still be hellishly disruptive on the market ... we have highly market sensitive policies.” Ben Watkins, program adviser, WFP Kenya

The CFGB certainly has some experience, but it has been limited to 10% of their annual spending. Though this new arrangement is many potential advantages, in the next quotation Dan Maxwell, the Regional Director of CARE in East Africa, in conjunction with the officer from WFP, brings forth the worries associated with a dramatic increase in spending on local economies in less industrialised countries,

“..we have concerns, one is the precise mirror opposite of the concern we have with monetisation – which is if you’re selling food in a country what does that do to trade disincentives, local disincentives, local production, labour markets. If you’re buying food in a local economy, all the same concerns apply but in the reverse, by buying food in a particular economy are you having a price effect that makes a whole different group of people vulnerable to food security. It took years to get this sort of analysis in place and even now I think its not good analysis, it’s a self-serving analysis to talk about the effects/impacts of

monetisation and even distribution on markets. And nobody's thought of what kind of analysis you'd need to do in advance on the potential impact on markets of local purchase.... They've [American NGOs] never had funds for local purchase. We've had a little bit of funding in Ethiopia that has come through the EU, but we have never done the procurement, the EU has a local Food Security unit in Addis, if they funnel food assistance that is locally purchased through NGOs, which they usually don't do, they usually do it through WFP, but if they do it through NGOs, they have their own procurement people, and I don't think that they're particularly looking at market analysis prior to or monitoring the effects during." Dan Maxwell, CARE East Africa

The consequences of the new agreement have yet to be seen.

Program Against hunger, MALNUTRITION & Disease

There are different branches of CIDA that deal in issues associated with hunger eradication and the history of the changes that have taken place in CIDA have made a large imprint on the operations of the CFGB. This section presents the evolution of the structural arrangements within CIDA that have led to its current formation.

In the 1990s, there was a short-lived attempt at establishing a centre that was specialised in food security issues. The Food Security Bureau (FSB) was established within the International Programs Branch (IPB), which is the branch connected to Agriculture Canada. It was formed during the process of creating the National Action Plan on Food Security. In general, the IPB deals with trade issues and missions, so this was their first encounter with the realm of food security and as a consequence, competencies within this area of food security were low. Their attempt at coordinating an inter-department initiative was not properly supported and as a result the FSB did not function well, and ended in a fiasco. A social scientist specialised in food security matters explains what occurred during this process and its outcome,

"We don't have an actual national food policy, which might have a bearing on food aid, we don't have a coherent joined up policy framework in which to

assess all the questions around food and agriculture. Because we don't have that, we don't have a guidance vacuum in the federal or provincial systems that coherently guide the way governments make decisions about agriculture and food. We have some Ag-policy and we have some nutrition guidelines, but we don't have some joined up food policy. So because of that, there's very little intersection between the domains that hinge upon food security. And so food security doesn't happen in the country at a policy level. And the Action Plan is just a series of statements that don't really lead to a coherent set of initiatives that enhance food security." Social Scientist in Food Security1

A result of this failed attempt was the move to shift food security-related issues to the Program Against Hunger, Malnutrition and Disease (PAHMD). This department is the primary one responsible for tackling international development issues related to food security and the one that controls the bulk of the funds to the CFGB. A number of changes have occurred in the past fifteen years that have led to PAHMD's current approach to fighting hunger, which has also impacted its relationship to the CFGB.

This department, responsible for fighting global hunger, was originally called the Food Aid Centre (FAC) located within the Multilateral Programs Branch (MPB). In 1992, the FAC, at the height of its budget, was allocated \$391 million to use on food aid programmes. Just over half of the funds went to NGOs and bilateral projects providing food aid, and the remaining portion was provided to multilateral partners, primarily the WFP.²⁸⁶ Food aid was integrated into Canada's overall overseas development assistance programme at a verily early stage and as a consequence it never became a part of the farm programme. This meant that over the years, despite the fact that Canadians consider themselves to be one of the nations that is feeding the world, the role it has been playing in hunger alleviation has been steadily decreasing.

The proceeding years were wrought with ebbs and flows in the food aid budget, followed by a significant decrease. In 1997, it had diminished to \$218million. It took approximately 5 years for the budget to regain its former heights, but by 2003 it reached a total of \$300million.

One-year prior, the Food Aid Centre was dismantled and recreated in the shape of the Program for Malnutrition, Hunger and Disease (notice the removal of ‘food’). In line with its new name, the department added a focus on malnutrition and disease, when Ernst Levinsohn, formerly an economist for UNICEF, took over as the general director of the programme. Mr. Levinsohn has been a controversial character; he’s been typified as a risk adverse fellow as a result of his interest in nutrition types of programming. Since he began his position at PAHMD, he has decisively shifted the GoC's food aid programmes to a focus away from food and onto nutrition-based programmes.

“So the Director General of PAHMD [Levinsohn] - the joke used to be ... [he] misspelled the acronym and left out the H. Well that’s because the H is silent - hunger. Because Ernst Levinsohn is more into micronutrients and not overall hunger - absolute hunger, [according to him] if you can have a sustainable programme to dispense vitamin A capsules that’s the solution.” Program officer, NGDO10

During a conversation with the Senior Advisor from the World Vision East Africa office in Nairobi, he highlights the connections between the Canadian government’s emphasis on nutrition programming and NGDOs overseas,

Q; Do you do micronutrient programming?

“Yes we do, especially when it comes to Canada, they are very good at micronutrients, they are funding a lot of micronutrient programs, WV Canada at least. They are very good in that area ... we are having a number of nutrition programming in emergency and WV Canada is always interested in nutrition programming, they are very much interested.”

A further move towards nutrition can be illustrated by the GoC’s support for the Micronutrient Initiative (MI), an international organisation premised on providing micronutrients to improve the physical effect associated with hunger. In the same year

that PAHMD was established, CIDA assisted in sponsoring the MI, a partner organisation to the GoC. Though it is not formally within the agency's structure, it receives a bulk of support from CIDA and partners in many activities. The Canadian director in India for the MI, who also happens to be a former PAHMD officer, described to me, the main attributes of the organisation,

“We work in 3 areas – eliminating and reducing vitamin A deficiency, and anaemia, which is iron for us. There are many causes but we focus on the iron and iodine deficiency's and its mainly salt iodization there... we're looking at providing iodized oil, which is a capsule that you take in emergency situations where they need it immediately –[there is] 6 months to a year where you know they will not get iodised salt so the approach is often one of a critical window where you know these children need it now, they even needed it when they were foetuses when they were developing, and if they don't have it they will carry it for the rest of their life, its damage that you cannot repair, your brain won't catch if it hasn't initially developed, its that kind of thing, or if you haven't grown properly, such as learning ability and you have to focus mainly on under two, it's the age group that is most vulnerable, often we target up to age 5, that's why we often target children, its not because they're in anyway more important its about, because what happens in those ages cannot be corrected. Not to compare too dramatically, but if you're deficient, for example, for men to be anaemic because a lot of men are anaemic in developing countries, they are less productive but if they are well nourished, as soon as they're well nourished again they become productive, its not like they're damaged and irreparable, or at least not to the same extent...That's our niche.” director for NDGO11 in Asia/ Former PAHMD officer

The country director's illustration of the immediate and essential impact that providing micronutrients can have, is a very important ingredient in any hunger alleviation programme. This is reflected in the fact that the MI receives a significant portion of PAHMD's budget for micronutrient-related activities. Moreover, these funds exceed those allocated to the CFGB. This director of MI and former PAHMD officer explains

the rationale behind the GoC's adoption of nutrition-based approaches over food-based ones,

“There are two types of food aid - emergency and development. Emergency food aid, the evidence shows that the most vulnerable don't die from actual hunger, they die from disease, 40% of kids die from diarrhoea and pneumonia, and there are some really cost effective ways of preventing those deaths. In a perfect world you do everything, you know that's clear - the perfect world for the child or parent is of course to have both the food, water, medical of course everything that's required. I think the approach of CIDA or PAHMDI is to reflect more the processes that are no longer the food aid programme, and that's partly two things, one is to reflect a gap, there's solid analysis of what's being done and there are many emergencies where too much food is provided and it crashes the prices - but they are highly, highly under funded on the health side. And so the thought was 'well we're always small in these emergencies so why doesn't Canada add value in areas that are highly under funded that can actually be untied...so why can't we provide medicines to compliment. I don't think CIDA ever says food is not a good thing, they're just saying that it's probably not the best thing that we can do, that we can add. Having said that, there's a perception that the food is stopped, people at CFGB will tell you that, but the real numbers are not that ... Another thing you need to look at is often referred to as the UNICEF framework on nutrition, so the causes, underlying causes, the determinants ... the immediate causes and the effects of malnutrition. And they've got immediate ones, that health, water, and sanitation and you can sort of look at that, and its that balance that's really off ... the view at CIDA was that the food amounts were often inflated, the WFP often inflates, it's huge business for them, including it's not a coincidence that the head of the WFP is always an American or has been at least the last 2 yrs, no coincidence, big politics and it's big business...so that's the politics of the food aid cycle.”
director for NDGO11 in Asia/ Former PAHMD officer

Though CIDA has had a strict policy of tying 90% of the funds to in-kind shipments of food, when it comes to purchasing micronutrients, the GoC does not have the same tied aid requirements. In a discussion with the officer from the MI, he explains how micronutrients are not a part of the tied air package,

Q: You don't have any requirements that a certain quota must be originate from CAN?

"No. We're lucky that way because it's not food, it doesn't fall under the food rule. The food rule has 90%, but this isn't food, the vitamin A capsules that we provide are to children under five, 6-59 months, about 80% of all the vitamin A that's distributed in public health programmes is provided by us, and that's sourced from Canada because it's considered, it's under the food category, but then the interesting thing is that we did an analysis recently and its actually the cheapest source, UNICEF actually purchases it from Canada." director for NDGO11 in Asia/ Former PAHMD officer

Interestingly, Canada is a major producer of vitamins and appears to be the most cost-effective country in which to purchase vitamin A pills. However, other types of micronutrients are also being purchased regionally, wherever the price is lowest.

Q: Where are you purchasing the Micronutrients?

"In Asia, it's largely India, there's a challenge in quality sometimes. In Africa, it's varied there are suppliers in South Africa, its capacity, these suppliers are increasingly trying to develop their local capacity...you know as the demand grows, its viable to do it in the country, so increasingly they are starting up in local companies, the main companies are in Europe and North America, so in India there are a number of suppliers we can work through, in fact we're just looking at the possibility of sourcing a project for Bolivia through India, because it's cheaper, even though the US is closer, the production costs are so much lower." director for NDGO11 in Asia/ Former PAHMD officer

This same officer offered his perspective on the shift in priorities of the government in relation to the CFGB and his own organisation,

“Now what the CFGB does with local procurement, you know there’s a lot of merit to that, no question, and they do get \$15 million per year from CIDA and it’s a very important part of the programme. There are restrictions with the amount given in kind, and they’re not comfortable with that, and a lot of people aren’t comfortable with that, and it [CFGB] tends to try to change that. And politically within Canada I don’t know that it’s that much of an issue, because it’s something like less than 1% of total food exports are food aid, so it’s not a big [deal], unlike in the US, food aid is not a big business. It’s something that I think Canadians feel strongly about, not just food aid but emergencies – you saw the Tsunami response, but also polling data has shown us over the years that when any Canadian thinks of development, first and foremost, they think emergency assistance. Which I think is personally problematic, because there’s a whole lot more to development than just that, it shows an image of helplessness, we’re helping them ... So the logic goes that we could spend millions of dollars every year, because food is really expensive, we could keep being a drop in the bucket or we could actually, either improve the quality of food - which is what we’re working on now - by fortifying the food in emergency situations. There’s camps, there’s situations in Africa recently, but it could happen anywhere - where cologara - which is one nutrient deficiencies which actually kills you, it was one of those old ones, like TB used to be one of those old diseases ... well in refugee camps where people are only fed corn and some extra stuff, you can easily meal the corn and add some nutrients to it and then you’ve got a better ration and that extra bit is unbelievably cheap. And that’s where Canada is going.” director for NDGO11 in Asia/ Former PAHMD officer

The aforementioned explanation provided by the former government employee on the rationale for the move from food aid is largely based on a notion that Canada can be more

effective in international development, in other words make more of an impact through providing vital nutritional supplements.

“Canada’s a small country with a small ODA budget and I think they would like to be able to have more direct attributions for what they’re supporting.”

Program officer, NGDO1

However in order for nutrition components to be added to programmes, NGDOs need to have the capacity to fulfil the requirements of the reporting procedures. Many Members expressed the difficulty in being able to satisfy the reporting and evaluation associated to nutrition-based projects. The regional director for CRWRC in East Africa, one of the key CFGB Members explains their struggle when trying to move into nutrition programming,

“..[Member staff] has been trying to send out encouraging emails to various countries, Partners and staff people to say you know there’s new money available for nutritional type projects. The problem is that most of our partners and staff don’t have a really strong health background and nutritional projects are verily technical. I don’t know if you know nutritional people with their little statistics. Its tough. And even for me, I’ve done university statistics and I’ve struggled reading those nutritional reports and understanding them and trying to set up a framework for a project and I couldn’t do that – we’d have to get some support in ... if its just some kind of normal kind of development project with some nutrition, let’s say food security project related to - nutritional kind of development project that CFGB would fund, I think that its not going to be taken advantage of by too many of our partners ‘oh Jacob that sounds like such a great idea let’s put together a nutrition/food security proposal and send it off to CFGB.’ I don’t think that’s going to happen, but I could be wrong. But what I’ve seen is that the nutritional stuff is a little inaccessible for a lot of our church partners. And in terms of the relief programmes, if we do a large relief programme like we did in Malawi and Zambia and CFGB or CIDA come and say we want a nutritional study to go with this relief programme, what did we last year in Malawi and Zambia was to hire somebody to do the work and there’s very little integration and that’s what happened ... And most of our

partners were 'you know what, we just didn't get it, I read the proposal I really didn't understand it, you know that nutritional guy can just do his study, don't even send me the final report, send me the paragraph that says if our food actually influenced the situation.' Its pretty inaccessible..." East Africa program director, Member in the Field1

Due to the newness of this area and the lack of expertise of NDGOs, it may be difficult for the CFGFB to access the new CIDA for this.

PAHMD's shift towards nutrition has also been interpreted by the NDGO sector as a conscious move to secure the agency more tangible, quicker results so that they can more easily demonstrate their achievements in international development. In the next passage a head of the policy section at the CFGFB offers an overview of the reasons for pushing nutrition-based approaches,

"..he [Levinsohn] has steadfastly and very strategically pursued that [micronutrient] strategy, at various times getting ministers for CIDA to receive a lot of credit for Canada's involvement in micronutrients so that reinforces his hand....seeing that results were becoming important and that it's relatively easy to measure the results of a micronutrient initiative and very difficult to measure the results of a food aid initiative. So therefore the whole results orientation was a tool that he could use to drive the ball into his corner, which works really well and he's continued to beat us over the head about results. But on the other hand its not just him, because you see that the neo-liberal drive, since the 80s has been to force the public sector to produce profitability-like indicators the way that the private sector does and those profitability indicators are those like results, so it isn't just Levinsohn on this issue." Head of Policy Section, CFGFB2

The current perspective at CIDA is a rationalistic one and has a great deal to do with push for a results-based framework. Since the late 1990s, CIDA has been requiring its implementing partners to use a Results Based Management framework for monitoring

and evaluating their programs. One of the program officers from a NGDO reinforces this by spelling out the current state of affairs surrounding the agency,

“It’s about results. Clearly what’s coming out of CIDA says that they are streamlining in order to be able to show attributions, for instance shifting from food approaches to pills they’re able to have attribution for blindness’s or death prevention.” Program officer, NGDOI

Organisations that have the capacity to shift to nutrition programming, such as the recently established MI, may have an advantage over the CFGB in attracting funds, as they can provide the GoC with the short-term results they endeavour towards. In the following excerpt, the MI officer explains how the MI's nutrition programmes' supplies results,

“We’ve been able to provide them with feasibility and acceptability largely. It’s a big risk, and we are working on the results now. In nutrition you have efficacy or effectiveness results. Efficacy is an experiment, you provide food to children in a verily controlled setting and know the inputs and you measure and the outputs, how they are growing etc. In-out, controlled ... What we do have is an efficacy study in Indonesia with the candy [protein rich toffee], that’s shown tremendous impact...We are also repeating this in India and the results will be shown soon.” MI

It can be argued that the GoC favours this form of measurement, a nutrition-approach, as it is a quicker way to see the effectiveness of a development project, as the development officer said, “in-out, controlled”. This is in contrast to the long-term measuring requirements associated with a population that has been provided with a variety of food products over a period of time.

The reality is that recognising the benefits of nutrition-based initiatives in hunger alleviation is an important part of any development programme. However, it is one ingredient among many. Today, PAHMD continues to be engaged in food aid, primarily

through the WFP, the CFGB, and some bilateral projects, however it has taken a large step in the direction of nutrition-based programming. Although the PAHMD has continued to support the CFGB in its food aid endeavour, its push towards nutrition-based approaches is nonetheless having an impact on the work of the organisation.

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²⁶⁶ Food Aid Convention, 1999. FAO. London. April 13 (1999) [online UN document] <http://www.fao.org/Legal/rtf/fac99-e.htm> [accessed January 6, 2008].

²⁶⁷ Elliesen, T. “Deciding on the Food Aid Convention’s Future“, [online article] *Magazine for Development and Cooperation*. February (2005). http://www.inwent.org/E+Z/content/archive-eng/02-2005/stud_art3.html [accessed 01/04/2008].

²⁶⁸ Shlomo, R. “From ‘food aid’ to ‘aid for food’: into the 21st century,” *Food Policy* 24 (1999) p.7-15.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Clapp, J. WTO Agricultural Trade Battles and Food Aid. *Third World Quarterly*, 25:8 (2004) p.1439–1452.

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²⁷² Windfuhr, M. “Catastrophic Record” *Right to Food Quarterly*. 1:1 (2006) p. 2 <http://www.fian.org/resources/documents/categoria-3/vol-1-no-1-right-to-food-quarterly> [accessed January 6, 2008].

²⁷³ “The Right to Food: Achievements and Challenges.” Report by Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. World Food Summit: Five Years Later, Rome, Italy 8-10 June (2002) Para. 2. <http://www.fao.org/Legal/rtf/wfts/htm> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²⁷⁴ Kälin, W., Müller L., & Wyttenbach, J. (eds.) *The Face of Human Rights*. Baden:Lars Müller Publishers (2004) p.200.

²⁷⁵ Lewis, J. & Skutsch, C. (eds.) *The Human Rights Encyclopedia*. New York: M.E. Sharpe (2001) p.208.

²⁷⁶ The World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals, 27th Session, Rome 28 May – 1 June (2001) para.1. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/003/Y0688e.htm> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, para. 2.

²⁷⁸ Seppanen, S. *Possibilities and Challenges of the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development*. The Erik Castrén Institute Research Reports. Helsinki (2005) 125pgs. p.46.

²⁷⁹ FAO. Voluntary Guidelines. Adopted by the 127th Session of the FAO Council November (2004) p.2 <http://www.fao.org> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²⁸⁰ FIAN International – Defending the Right to Food Worldwide. Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food.

<http://www.fian.org/fian/index.php?option=content&task=category§ionid=4&id> [accessed 01/04/2008].

²⁸¹ *ibid.*, para. 5.

²⁸² FSPG. *Canada's Trade and Development Midterm Report*. Nov.5 (2002) www.ccic.ca/e/002/trade_2002_11_food_security_roundtable.shtml [accessed 01/04/2008].

²⁸³ CCIC. *Canada's Position at WTO puts World's Poor Farmers and Hungry at Greater Risk*. News Release. November 5 (2002)

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²⁸⁵ “Rule hinders food aid efforts, groups say.” CBC News. [online news] January 7, 2005 <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2005/01/06/aid050106.html> [accessed 01/04/2008].

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CHAPTER 9 - Stuck in the Missionary Position?

The previous four chapters have largely focused on the deterministic aspects of the Canadian international aid system's influence on the CFGB in an attempt to develop an explanatory narrative to explain the changing context of hunger alleviation programming. The purpose of this chapter is to present the main recurrent themes to provide further insight into the CFGB's programming. Four broad themes were identified that bring out the story of the NGDO and its current organisational form:

- Appropriate Action
- Aid Conditionality
- A Tradition of Giving
- Goal Displacement

These themes are central to the explanation of the CFGB's organisational change process, as it moves from an organisation founded on food aid, to one that is beginning to look at food security as an alternative. In brief, the first theme *Appropriate Action* addresses the normative environment of development assistance, by looking at the appropriateness of the CFGB's practices in relation to the rest of the NGDO sector; the second theme *A Tradition of Giving* reflects the taken-for-granted basis from which the CFGB's constituents relate to the provision of food aid; the third theme *Aid Conditionality* examines the expedience in which the CFGB interacts with the GoC and the Agribusiness Industry; and the final one looks at the CFGB from the inside, according to theme of *Goal Displacement*, an idea which is fluid throughout the analysis, as the organisation begins to change from programs based is considered a short-term approaches to development, to those involving a longer-term perspective. As mentioned, they will be presented following the chapters on the individual actors involved with the CFGB.

On the whole, the interpretation of the data and the analysis aims to illustrate the symbolic subordination of the CFGB in relation to NGDOs in the sector, as well as the structural subordination of the organisation to its funding bodies, that continually shapes

the organisation's development course. The study emphasises that while the CFGB may pursue its own distinct interests, it does so under conditions of great constraint. The following is a perspective on the story of the CFGB in its struggle to remain successful by adapting, or not, to influences within the Canadian international aid system.

These themes are essential to the explanation of the CFGBs organisational change process, as it increasingly introduces food security approaches as an alternative development programme. Scott's three pillars of institutions, as well as the mechanisms through which the CFGB complies with the environment, as proposed by DiMaggio and Powell are presented within each theme. Furthermore, each theme includes the way in which the CFGB has responded to institutional pressure, according to Oliver's framework.

9.1 Appropriate Action

An important story in the case study involves the notion that some development practices to alleviate hunger are better than others. With increase in knowledge on hunger and its determinants, the past 50 years has seen a high amount of ambiguity within the institutional environment of hunger alleviation. For the CFGB, the changing nature of the global conception of hunger has resulted in a high level of uncertainty in its organisational field. The consequences have taken the form of questions over the conceptual and actual correctness of international development practices to alleviate hunger, which have translated into real and potential scrutiny over the appropriateness of CFGB's food aid practices.

Initially, the changes that took place in the institutional logic associated with hunger were exogenous to the NGDO sector, involving advances introduced originally by marginal participants, such as researchers, and were later adopted by multilateral agencies and leading NGDOs, who were driven to do so by increased competition. These new practices became conventions when used recurrently and subsequently became

institutional practices by acquiring a normative character, sustaining some form of legitimacy.

At the core of the CFGB's relationship with the NGDO sector is the social pressure associated with the existence of heterogeneous, divergent or discordant beliefs and practices. The NGDO sector appears to be in a process of shifting from a foundation combining charity and social justice perspectives, to a perception built on concerns for social justice in light of environmental sustainability.

This is played out in the decline in food-based approaches among NGDOs, although few have abandoned it altogether. Rather the sector has steadily decreased the number and proportion of these programmes, which were at first strongly supported by the normative and regulative structures. Today, however even the scope of the regulative support is narrowing, so that fewer NGDOs continue this, and that new ones initiate programmes that are premised on food security and nutrition.

Though the CFGB continues to prioritise food aid as a development strategy, similar patterns of change can be seen in its structural features in relation to the rest of the NGDO sector. Furthermore, as the conditions associated with acquiring funds become further constrained, the CFGB has responded by actively pursuing exchange relationships and initiatives, such as the FSPG, within the NGDO sector in an attempt to offset some of its dependence on the GoC. The relationship between the CFGB and the NGDO sector is another story that has impacted the behaviour of the CFGB.

The sector can be characterised based on the fragmented nature of the institutional logic of hunger and the variety of approaches employed to fight hunger. Although there is diversity in the types of programmes provided by NGDOs in the sector, the vast majority pursue development based on promoting long-term sustainability. The greater part of the sector is working in service delivery based, as well as a smaller number of NGDOs focusing on advocacy as a means to tackle hunger issues. NGDOs have been very engaged, especially since the 1990s, in trying to promote the shift to food security, with initiatives such as working groups and the annual National Food Security Conferences.

NGDOs with an international profile have been pursuing a variety of different means in which to tackle hunger issues, however they have been premised on long-term development. From capacity building through educational radio programmes, digging wells, to providing seeds and tools, Canadian NGDOs have adopted an approach based on sustainable development to end hunger.

Alliance - A Form of Compliance

There is a high degree of competitive interdependence between NGOs over government funds. The CFGB is dependent upon the same pool of resources from the GoC as the rest of the NGOs in the sector, to the degree that if one receives additional resources it omits the other(s) and because of the unstable political environment this can end up in severe cases where organisational survival may be threatened.

Although there is diversity in the types of programmes provided by NGOs in the sector, the vast majority pursue development based on promoting long-term sustainable development. NGOs have been very engaged, especially since the 1990s, in trying to promote the shift to food security; their greatest initiative being the annual National Food Security Conferences that first began in 2001. The majority of the Canadian NGO sector is working in service delivery based, as well as a smaller number of NGOs focusing on advocacy to tackle hunger issues. From capacity building through educational radio programmes, to digging wells, to providing seeds and tools, NGOs have adopted an approach based on sustainable development to end hunger.

It is little surprise that the CFGB spearheaded the establishment of the FSPG to work on policy issues that deals with hunger however from a different perspective than food aid. This network of NGOs seeks to make an effect on Canadian policy makers, through dialogue at the national level. The primary platform of the FSPG to date has been the consistent appeal for development through rural agricultural development. Though it was an initiative of the CFGB, the members of the group are, by and large, opposed to the supply of food aid for development purposes.

The CFGBs membership to this group is beneficial to the NGO as it demonstrates that it is concerned with issues that are related to development through different means other than the free distribution of food, of food-for-work types of programmes. It demonstrates that the CFGB recognises that hunger is a question of opportunity of livelihoods, not access to food. It also is an indication of the dilemma that the CFGB finds itself in. When institutional values are themselves undecided, “complex societies typically hold conflicting goals and beliefs, any of which can be used to rationalize and justify particular practices”. A practice, like food aid, considered illegitimate by one measure could seem fairly legitimate by another.

Though the CFGB continues to prioritise food aid as a development strategy, similar patterns of change can be seen in its structural features in relation to the rest of the NGDO sector. Furthermore, as the conditions associated with acquiring funds become further constrained, the CFGB has responded by actively pursuing exchange relationships and initiatives, such as the FSPG, within the NGDO sector in an attempt to offset some of its dependence on the GoC. The relationship between the CFGB and the NGDO sector is another story that has impacted the behaviour of the CFGB.

9.2 Aid Conditionality

The need to adopt practices or principles within the system has unfolded in a variety of shapes. First off, the GoC’s concern over nutrition programmes, has led to the promotion of nutrition components within CFGB-funded projects. Next, in the NGDO sector there is widespread support for development programmes focused on long-term sustainability in the form of food security, as well as the increasing prevalence of advocacy-related initiatives. Though the CFGB only carries out 20% of its programming in this area, it has actively been seeking more funds to dedicate to this area. In addition, the organisation has recently increased its contact with constituents to further develop an understanding of the dynamics of hunger through various capacity-building programmes. Thus, the CFGB has been overtly attempting to mimic the nutrition-based model proposed by the GoC to secure more essential resources, and food security programmes to obtain more legitimacy

within the sector. Though pressure from the public has not been a main issue thus far, the organisation has been pursuing a proactive communications strategy with its constituents to offset any potential problems that might arise.

Some of the strongest pressures for change are as a consequence of coercive mechanisms within the institutional field. There are two main coercive influences affecting the organisation - direct pressure from the GoC and indirect pressure from the Agribusiness industry. In both cases, it is expediency that prompts the behaviour of CFGB.

The Iron Fist of Government of Canada

Formal stresses are those imposed by the national and international priorities of the GoC, and serve as a form of coercive pressure on the CFGB to conform to the government's international development priorities. The Government's priorities in hunger alleviation, during past half century, have also undergone dramatic change. As governance structures have become less unitary, including complex mixtures of public, non-profit and multilateral implementing bodies. Organisational forms for delivering aid have become more diverse and interconnected, for instance in emergency, rehabilitation, development types of programmes. The boundaries of these forms have become more blurred and consensus on logics governing NGDO sector behaviour has been increased in terms of innovative sustainable development practices, however reduced in that the focus should be long-term development rather than short-term.

First off, at a global level, a main issue is that the institutional logic associated with responding to hunger is in the process of being displaced for another one. From 1950s - 1970s, Northern governments embraced shipping food overseas under the guise of development, viewing hunger as a problem that could be remedied by food stocks at the national level. Deficiencies in the initial cognitive frame prevented governments in highly industrialised nations from dealing adequately with the significant problems of hunger and resulted in new regulative adjustments, as well as a focus on NGDOs and multilateral organisations as the enabler's in hunger alleviation.

Thirty years later, it has been shown that an entirely new cognitive frame, based on rural sustainable production, has emerged, which has taken a local view of the problem, and has elevated NGOs into higher-level positions in international development. This in turn, has evoked new normative responses from the international aid community, activists and academics, which over time has created new conceptions of the nature of the problem and appropriate solutions: a new cognitive frame to deal with hunger.

DiMaggio and Powell argue that organisations are often under pressure to offer the same programmes and services provided by other organisations that are perceived to be successful.²⁸⁷ A key issue centres on the GoC's push towards the inclusion of nutrition components in programmes to fight hunger. Because the GoC has national regulatory directives, many of the CFGBs responses can also be seen among NGOs within the sector. Thus, to demonstrate its attempt at enhancing programming efforts, the CFGB adopted the government's new "innovation," otherwise known as nutrition programmes. Political pressures on the CFGB are the result of the shift in governmental support for the previous institutional arrangements of food-based approaches, for ones premised on nutrition.

In an attempt to spur on the move towards nutrition-based development programmes, the GoC has instituted a funding arrangement so that NGOs can obtain more funds should they comply. Though the CFGB has been attempting to engage in nutrition activities, the organisation is finding that the capacity among field staff from member church agencies has not yet been developed; as well the reporting requirements are complex. The reporting requirements are such that it necessitates staff to have a formal training in nutrition, and many of the Members do not have such capacity. Also most partner organisations are working at an even lower capacity and the added requirement to assess and implement nutritional features in a project has proven difficult. The consequence of this has been that the Members have not had access to the added programming resources. This places additional stress on the CFGB as it loses possibilities for supplementary funding.

Concerning the GoC's push towards nutrition, the CFGB has employed a strategy of acquiescence. Though it has not been able to actively comply with the GoC's interest in going full force in this area, this tactic has been based on its inability to satisfy the regulative requirements, rather than a desire to defy this initiative. By accepting the government's pursuit of nutrition-based approaches as a means to end hunger, though it sees less value in this approach than a food-based one, the CFGB has chosen to conform to this initiative in order to be rewarded with further resources.

An ongoing political pressure on the CFGB relates to the rules associated with sending Canadian food assistance overseas. Though the new regulations have reduced the amount of food the CFGB is required to ship from Canada to 50%, it continues to pose strain on the CFGB's budget. The fact is that even though the NGDO can purchase more food locally, it now has to deal with the problems that arise due to the disruption on local markets that result from large-scale purchasing of food aid for programmes. In addition to the disruption on the markets, the CFGB itself is under more pressure to become specialised within its logistics section, which is currently only one person, in familiarizing themselves with the market, connecting with local traders and shipping the product from within the recipient nation.

This is not to say that criticisms over sending food aid from Canada have disappeared either. In light of the increasing incidences of natural disasters, the potential for increased pressure from Partners for food-based programmes will also escalate. As the debate over the appropriateness of food aid continues to rise, the CFGB runs the risk of continually having the legitimacy of its programming choices scrutinized.

Further problems associated with tied aid concern the question of GM food aid. Though 50% of the budget can be used to purchase food locally, the conditions on the other half of the budget remain in tact. What this means is that if the country of origin has certain restrictions on food aid that is genetically modified, or if the destination countries' cultural preferences cannot be satisfied by foods found on the Canadian market, the CFGB cannot provide assistance. Otherwise put, the GoC has maintained a high degree of constraint on the programming efforts of the organisation.

Another manner in which the CFGB is structured according to the technical and legal requirements of the GoC is through periodic financial reporting. The sector of Canadian NGDOs is afforded the additional constraint of providing multiple financial reports throughout the term of their agreement with the GoC, however this arrangement does not exist with multilateral organisations. The issue is that the budgets of multilateral organisations are substantially higher, along with their capacity and the amount of funds they receive from the GoC, while NGDOs that receive a pittance in comparison are subject to stringent reporting requirements.

Overall, the GoC institutionalizes and legitimates rules that are replicated and revealed through organisational structures at the CFGB. These rules can also be seen throughout the rest of the NGDO sector. If the CFGB does not oblige the GoC, in fulfilling the conditions of the grant agreement, they run the risk of losing their funding in the next round of negotiations.

The relationship with the GoC is a complicated one. In terms of the CFGB's own funding agreement with CIDA, rather than allowing the CFGB free access to its budget, it has increased the pressure on the organisation by requiring it to become skilled in the purchase of food from local markets in less industrialised nations. This act may have made it more difficult for the CFGB to program food aid; however it has not made an impact of the organisations priority towards this form of development practice. Furthermore, though the government has made more resources available for international programming it has been with the condition that nutrition components with complex reporting requirements are included, this too serves as an additional constraint on the NGDO in gaining access to additional funds in the system, however does not necessarily lead to changes within its operations.

The Agribusiness Industry - The White Elephant in the Room

The other set of coercive pressures associated with the CFGB's continued provision of food aid, revolves around the Agribusiness industry and its promotion of a GMO agenda overseas. The support the CFGB receives from the Agribusiness industry is a contentious

issue in many circles, particularly among NGOs in the sub-sector. Though the Agribusiness Industry, in itself, has no direct influence on the CFGB, an informal pressure has emerged due to its dependence on agricultural inputs for CFGB Growing Projects. Should the CFGB engage in discussions over the appropriateness of GMOs in food aid, at any level, it runs the risk of losing its favourable relationship with the Industry. Accordingly, the CFGB has evaded taking a deep look or a firm stance on this issue thus far. Furthermore, it was made blatant that discussions over the health and safety of GMOs in food aid are extremely sensitive within the CFGB and among constituents, as a large portion of the constituency is engaged in agricultural practices involving the production of GM goods, even for Growing Projects.

This question of GMOs in food aid is especially significant as well as delicate, as it touches the core of the controversy over the legitimacy of food aid. The agricultural sector is a key source of revenue in developing countries and exceptional stress has and continues to be placed on this sector. Agricultural biotechnologies from North America are responsible for the redesign of agricultural systems in Canada and now this phenomena is has moved to less industrialised nations. Because the long-term consequences are yet unknown, the possibility remains that the CFGBs provisions of GMOs through food aid could play a role in contamination of native varieties and pose even greater challenges to biodiversity and sustainability in these regions. Consequently, many governments have gone to lengths to keep their agricultural systems free from GMOs, while on the other hand, the number of new countries accepting biotech crops appears to be expanding.

Another interesting, albeit small, feature in the complex relationship between the CFGB and Agribusiness, is the issue of personnel. The former communications officer at the CFGB is now the national PR person for Monsanto Canada. This has served to strengthen the ties that the NGO has to the private sector and facilitates a stronger relationship to the corporation.

The strategy employed by the CFGB in responding to the issue of GMOs has been one of avoidance. The majority of the NGO sector is in staunch opposition to the technology,

while the government continues to pursue a national and international programme based on the spread of GMO, and the range of reactions by recipient nations from acceptance to rejection – the nature of the issue is increasingly unclear. In addition to these predicaments, the question of GMOs poses an even greater challenge to the CFGB as it moves from a question of ethics to one of economic survival, where each of its three key funding bodies are connected to the proliferation of GMOs in one way or another.

In summation, coercive pressures from the government and the Agribusiness industry play different roles in highlighting the reasons for the CFGB's current organisational structure. Although the connection between Canadian Agribusiness and the proliferation of GM aid is less direct, it may be in the best interest of the CFGB to revisit its relationship with the industry. Through enabling the continuation of Growing Projects it plays a significant role in ensuring the survival of the organisation; in spite of leaving itself vulnerable to criticism from the sector. Because of the high dependence it has on the resources from Agribusiness, the CFGB has maintained a high degree of silence over the issue of GMOs. The relationship to the Industry does not provide a space to discuss discontinuing food aid, especially not in light of the threats posed by GMOs.

9.3 A Tradition of Giving

Breaking Bread with those in Need

Another key feature in the story that explains why the CFGB continues its focus on food aid, is as a consequence of the *iron cage* of the member church agencies. The CFGB stands firmly in place regarding its responsive role towards its Members, which has changed little since the establishment of the organisation. The management argues that they are acting on behalf of their constituents, the majority of which come from the rural parts of Canada, and who are not interested in changing this programming practice.

This argument is largely based on the connection between Canadian farm families and the tradition of sharing of food. The establishment of the CFGB is based on the initiative of Canadian farm families that were afforded with a plentiful harvest, to send food to

regions without. However, today the situation surrounding Canadian farm families is very different. Due to a variety of national and international influences, there is a trend towards the increase in large-scale farms at the expense of small-scale ones. For many farm families, the “bottom line” gets closer with each passing year and the reality that their future on the farm is uncertain.

For the CFGB, the implications of the demise of small-scale farms in Canada are considerable. As farmer-initiated Growing Projects are the first step in resource gathering for the CFGB, and that the majority of Growing Projects are lead by small-scale farmers, the loss of the family farm has potentially severe effects on the success of the CFGB. When the environment generates symbolic uncertainty, organisations are more likely to imitate the models of organisations they deem legitimate or successful.²⁸⁸ Thus in order to ensure the success of the organisation, it has overtly attempted to mimic the dominant forms within the environment.

To sum up, the constituents of the member churches enjoy the tradition of giving food from Canada to vulnerable regions of the globe. As the constituents are the “bread of life” for the Members and the CFGB alike, and the first step in the resource-gathering activity, it provides a significant account for understanding the current organisational form.

9.4 Goal Displacement

Oliver also suggests that the strategies an organisation can use are also institutionally structured;²⁸⁹ this can be seen in the case of the CFGB in its cautious movement towards change. For the first 20 years of its establishment, the CFGB worked to become an expert in the procurement and shipment of food aid. It increasingly added to its membership, which led to fostering more and more ties with partner organisations around the world. Its achievements can also be measured according the continual increase in the number of Growing Projects across Canada. Moreover, the organisation’s success has extended to

the bureaucratic level in terms of the steadily increasing funding by the Canadian government. It had reached many great achievements.

Throughout this period, the small portion of the budget that could be used on projects not related to food aid went to proposals such as those based on training in agricultural techniques and projects for sourcing water. For almost 20 years, the organisation has independently continued to expand its operations, without the need for widespread involvement with its constituents, that is, until 2002, when shipments of Canadian food aid were first rejected.

The above walk down memory lane does not represent the current reality of the organisation. The social and political climate at the beginning of the 21st century was a crucial influence on the rate of institutional transformation at the CFGB, and so too was the capacity of the manager to promote change. However, the atmosphere surrounding the CFGB's food aid programme erupted in 2001 with the rejection of GM food aid to Africa. For the first time, many member church agencies were compelled to re-evaluate their operations.

The intention is not to hold this date up as *the* major turning point in the CFGB's history, but only to remark that around this period, the process of change within the NGDO significantly sped up. Institutional theory argues that the actions of an organisation are according to the identity and values that it develops over the course of time.²⁹⁰ However, a key underlying issue throughout this study is the problem that institutional values concerning the response to hunger are relatively undefined.

The practice of food aid, considered illegitimate by one measure could seem fairly legitimate by another. The NGDO sector in Canada has no steadfast rules in place concerning the best methods to fight hunger, though there is a convergence towards an approach centred on food security. NGDOs are beginning to look more closely at each other's guiding principles and methods. With that said, this convergence toward food security principles is still in its early stages, common practices exist but not formally.

Approaches and understandings to fighting hunger remain varied and wide-ranging.

In the CFGBs case, while the goal of ending global hunger may be specific, the methods of carrying it out differ from the rest of the sector. For this reason, while certain NGOs in the sector organize projects built on training farmers in agricultural technologies, other NGOs could use a different approach based on, for example, developing farmer cooperatives. In the same way, the CFGB's mission of fighting hunger through food aid may be considered contentious in some circles while, having legitimacy in others. The central point is that commonly accepted rules or standards continue to be absent.

However, to counterbalance the uncertainty associated with the environment, the CFGB has engaged in imitating the models of other NGOs in the sector, which have been deemed legitimate or successful. A further mimetic isomorphism can be seen through the CFGB's membership to the FSPG. In being a part of this working group of NGOs, the CFGB gains the legitimacy associated with the sector. The way the CFGB has imitated the model of programming of other NGOs can be seen through operational features, primarily in its commitment to food security programmes. As the practice of shipping food aid is out of sync with the normative forces in the sector, introducing practices considered legitimate, serve to offset scrutiny. Though the CFGB's level of commitment to food security programmes is limited, the interest remains high.

Another circumstance involving an ideal type that has more subtly spread from the sector to the CFGB has been the hiring of staff members with a particular skill set. Institutionalists argue that a change in leadership or personnel in an organisation can lead to shifts in organisational values.²⁹¹ The variety of changes that have transpired in the organisational structure of the CFGB can be linked to the recent hiring of younger individuals with a skill set that reflect the dominant normative structures in the organisational field, more specifically, new personnel are educated in international development from a combined perspective of social justice and the environment.

In this regard, the normative pressures related to "professionalisation" come from the new, younger and specialized staff. Prior to this, there has only been one member of the staff that is educated as an agronomist. Despite his efforts, he explained that he has been

unable to encourage discussion at the organisation. Looking at this phenomenon from a time dimension, I argue that since the new personnel were hired, this “voice” has increased to the level that mobility on these issues are beginning to take shape. The new personnel, through defining the circumstances of their work from a sustainable development viewpoint, test the current cognitive foundation of the CFGB. In these cases, though the personnel are committed to the organisation’s mandate to fight hunger, they also hold a high degree of professional adherence.

The composition of the CFGB’s personnel is not unlike other NGDOs in the sector, there are a variety of disparate professions in each. However, as the environmental imperatives have become more prevalent in the global discourse, in many NGDOs normative isomorphism is occurring through hiring of personnel specialised in environmental issues. This is apparent in the decision-making, where similar policies or practices centring on food security have been adopted and endorsed across the sector. This also extends to the staff at the CFGB, that consider it normatively legitimate, to solve the problems associated with shipping food aid through both purchasing food locally and the introduction of more food security programmes. I also observed on-site socialisation regarding alternatives to food aid as also occurring at the CFGB as a consequence of staff meetings, informal discussions and the many opportunities that staff has to visit projects or take part in activities such as food study tours.

While on-the-job socialisation is the prime method leading to a changing view of food security at the CFGB, socialisation in the organisational field is another isomorphic force in place. The National Food Security Conferences are an opportunity for personnel from NGDOs to meet and, for example, to attend the same workshops and roundtables. However, due to the issue that the Conferences are hosted in different provinces each year the costs to attend and it is normal procedure that one or two representatives from each NGDO are present. From my experience in attending the 2nd and 3rd Conferences, it is often the same individual(s) from each NGDO, those interested in food security, who attends year after year. This is problematic in terms of the amount of knowledge transfer that can occur. Moreover, though the CFGB was co-hosting the 2nd Conference in Winnipeg, and many staff took part in the planning process, only few attended as regular

operations continued. This was an ideal opportunity for personnel to attend and broaden their knowledge in the area, though it would have, at the same time, underlined the distinctions between the CFGB and the rest of the NDGOs in the field.

Controversial Agri-culture

In general, the CFGB has managed to acquire both legitimacy and the essential resources to survive, irrespective of its productive efficiency, because it has adopted many normative elements within its institutional environment. As previously presented, in the eyes of the public, feeding the hungry with food shipped from Canada has and continues to be viewed in a positive and legitimate light. Subsequently, questions over the inefficiency in costs of shipping and timeliness have been avoided. However one such discussion that has not stayed out of the limelight is the debate over GMOs in food aid.

To accurately address the question of providing food aid, it must include a discussion on the proliferation of GMOs through food aid from the perspective of the member church agencies and the issue of their constituency. Discussions with farmer-constituents over the health and safety of GMOs are not an easy topic. According to many farmers, the GMO technologies that are on the market make good economic sense, are useful in clearing fields of volunteers, which means one less cost. However after the incident in 2001, where the CFGB maize shipments from Canada were rejected upon arrival in Africa, the Members began discussing the question of GMO food aid.

Though many of the Members went to lengths to discuss this issue with their constituents, the final word was ambiguous. This vagueness can be interpreted in a variety of ways. One of the critical features in this story is the highly unsettled regulative environment concerning GMOs. The proliferation of GMOs around the globe is becoming a growing reality, with the GoC as a steering force. The position of the CFGB to maintain its practice of shipping food, though it informs countries that the shipments are not GM-free, speaks to the level of interconnectedness between this technology and the constituency. This story demonstrates that the constituents are not only playing a significant role in maintaining the practice of food aid because of the tradition of giving,

but also because there is little recognition of the potential environmental impact of GMOs in food aid.

Communication for Legitimation

In relation to the changing normative environment on hunger alleviation, the CFGB has made significant changes in its communications strategy. Prior to the controversy over GM that enveloped the organisation in 2003, the CFGB's communication approach seemed less than proactive or stimulating. The communications, i.e. the annual reports and website, were adequate in terms of the history and goals of the organisation, as well as being reactive to occasional events that warranted a response. However, an overall perception of the organisation was missing, perhaps due to the low level of interaction, or a sense of lacking information on operations, regardless the communications were inadequate and provided a haven for critique of the CFGB.

The result was that shortly thereafter the CFGB went on the offensive. Largely due to hiring a new communications coordinator to "re-brand" so to speak, the NGDO, a series of additional and improved communications emerged. The new ventures in promoting the NGO were primarily web-based, stories from constituents on food study tours, or from field staff or senior staff, as well as a series of images that depict the tragedies of hunger and the positive impact that the CFGB is contributing. An improved attempt to build support and understanding took the shape of regular bulletins or reports on issues of food justice and trade, also interactive blog sites have appeared on the website of the NGO.

The newsletter *Breaking Bread*, is a good example of a work in progress, with each new edition the appearance has improved as well as the content. To give an illustration, there are sections on education and food justice in the second and fourth editions that provide important information about farmers in the South and how trade imbalances lead to situations of hunger, and how Canadians get involved in the struggle towards food justice. The sections on programming are slightly misleading, although the CFGB engages in food security programming, its resources are employed by and large to provide food aid, however the heavy communication about its various food security

programmes present a more balanced outlook. Also, the Special Food Justice Update and the blog sites are a creative means to attract, engage and educate constituents, especially younger people, about current and crucial global trade events impacting hunger.

According to Oliver, the most vigorous of the five reactions to institutional pressures is manipulation.²⁹² The CFGB has disabled the institutional resistance associated with food aid by spearheading the establishment of the FSPG to enhance its legitimacy. By persuading other organisations to join a working group promoting sustainable long-term development it has tactically used institutional ties to demonstrate to the NGDO sector and the public its values in sustainable development.

In the Pursuit of International Relations

The international sphere may be construed as a minor force due to its indirect links with the CFGB, however it has a great impact on legitimizing the CFGB's current organisational form. The practice of providing food aid remains in line with macro-level systemic practices of multilateral organisations like the WFP, as well as large-scale international development organisations like CARE. Further legitimacy for food aid can be seen through the GoC's continued support to multilateral agencies engaged in the programming of food aid.

Moreover, the CFGB has begun to increasingly engage in discussions that may lead to an increased legitimizing of the organisation. The policy head of the CFGB, has actively sought to enter and manoeuvre discussions at the international level by taking part in a variety of global events in hopes of adjusting institutional processes related to the continuation of food aid. Many personnel, including management at the CFGB have actively taken part in the international events related to Ministerial Meetings of the WTO, World Food Summits in Rome, and most recently it have been engaged in discussions over the negotiations of the new international food aid commitments by the FAC. In regards to the FAC, Canada's renewed commitment to a global food aid reserve would not only ensure the continued support for food-based approaches, but also legitimacy of the CFGB.

The CFGB has been skilful in countering the pressures associated with the organisational field, which has enabled the organisation to by and large maintain its original organisational form. It has done this through a variety of means. It has individually attempted to redefine the terms of its funding agreements with the GoC through direct negotiations, as well as through the use of the media to disperse its messages. The CFGB has also been actively managing the pressures from the field by going to lengths to improve its image in the public – nationally this has occurred through an improved communication strategy and internationally it has been in the form of international discussion and events. An additional method has been its strategic engagement with other NGDOs from that sector facing related pressures. Through the collective action of the FSPG, the CFGB has also tried to dispute the short-term based international development priorities the government, in favour of long-term sustainable development.

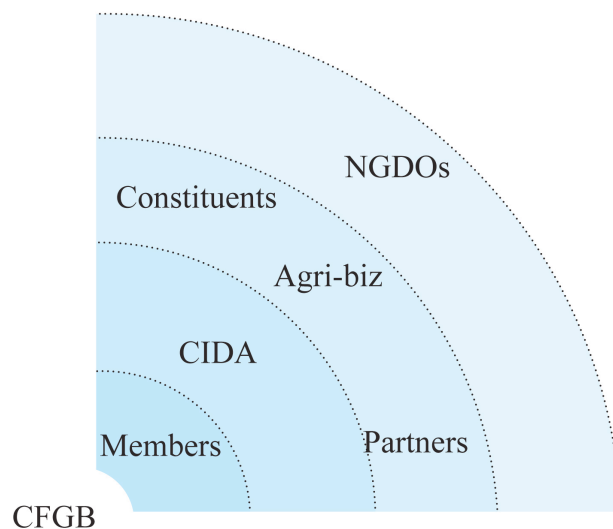
To conclude this chapter, though the CFGB is faced with questions over the conceptual correctness in providing food aid, it has managed to continue to pursue food aid by off-setting the controversy by including alternative forms of aid in its programming. The NGDO sector promotes food security as the legitimate means in which to alleviate hunger and the CFGB has increasingly been adding programmes of this nature to its operations. The government continues to financially support the CFGB's programming, however it has made itself very clear that its priorities centre on pushing a development platform based on micronutrients as the most appropriate method to battle hunger. The CFGB is also complying with the priorities set by the GoC, however minimally, as a means to gain further legitimacy and vital resources. Finally and arguably most important, is the perspective of the constituency - that giving food is good. This is the underlying and essential element that ensures the success of the CFGB as an NGDO that is premised on the provision of food aid as a means to fight hunger.

In summation, the CFGB has been labouring to manage the variety of influences in its organisational field. This has been dependent upon its ability to compromise by adapting to some aspects of the institutional environment and by avoiding others. This table provides a “boiled-down” illustration of the complex relations between the CFGB and the actors in the Canadian international aid system. The illustration shows the various actors

in the field and the level of their influence on the CFGB. The strength of the influences is shown according to the distance between the actor and the NGDO.

Figure 8. Organisational Influence according to Practice

Organisational influence according to practice



The notion of influence in this dissertation has been described according to the cognitive, normative and regulative pressures within the organisational field, which otherwise known as the “international aid system”.

The next chapter is the conclusion. It brings together the main issues in the case to establish a clearer picture of the organisational change process that has transpired at the CFGB as it relates to and interacts with, the actors in the Canadian international aid system.

CHAPTER 10 - Conclusion & Reflections

Today, NGDOs are dependent actors in a changing global environment. They are modest economic players, though they have the ability to impact policies and politics to develop and improve exchanges in marginalised regions. They are operating in an ever more competitive environment, characterised by a deficient and decreasing resource base.

However, a NGDO is more than a reflection of the influences that exist in a given social sphere. It is a collection of colourful actors, operating procedures and an organisational structure that defines and protects its interests. These aforementioned elements are determined by the institutional structures that establish specific perspectives in a NGDO and to the extent of their significance and priority.

In the quest to end hunger, NGDOs have a pivotal responsibility. They play a key intermediary and implementing role between highly and less industrialised regions of the globe and carry out many diverse types of bilateral programmes. However, NGDOs also face many obstacles; one of the main issues is the need to stay at the forefront of carrying out effective development programmes. To do this, a NGDO must have the capacity to continually transform and reinvent itself.

The dissertation took its departure in the story of a Canadian NGDO with a mission to fight hunger, and the unstable and changing environment from which it emerged. A main purpose of the study has been to create insight into the process of organisational change within the context of a NGDO involved in the international aid system. It also aimed to contribute to NGDO literature with a qualitative understanding of a NGDO change process - a constant situation that NGDOs face within this dynamic and ever-changing environment of aid. The social constructivist perspective of the dissertation highlights the idiographic understanding of the uniqueness of each NGDO's story, and concentrates on the interconnectedness between the NGDO and its institutional environment.

The study attempted to show the convoluted relationship of a single NGDO and the variety of actors in the Canadian international aid system that play a role in influencing its organizational structure. The endeavour was to shed light on how a NGDO is influenced by the variety of actors in the international aid system, where NGDOs are left to adjust to external and internal influences of the actors in order to ensure their survival and prosperity.

The research highlights the contextual nature of organisational change rather than single standing aspects of the phenomenon. The analytical frame was premised on the notion that organisational change can be interpreted both as a result of the interaction between institutional pressures from a NGDO's environment and the adaptive capabilities of a NGDO's management. It pointed to the issue that NGDOs are continually dealing with a variety of pressures, restrictions and exchange relationships that influence their formal and informal organisational structures and during periods of high uncertainty or where objectives are ambiguous, the pressures to change are amplified.

The CFGB's process of change was explored according to the changing context of global hunger and the responses to it. What made this case particularly interesting was that the CFGB has been changing at a very slow rate, in relation to the rest of the NGDO sector. In fact, it has resisted changing its primary practice of supplying food aid, a practice that has been out of line with the majority of Canadian NGDOs for decades, and instead just introduced practices considered more legitimate within the sector.

While NGDOs have been reliant upon the generosity of governments and the public for decades, new associations and arrangements have had to be developed in order for NGDOs to be able to maintain their mission-related activities and ensure their survival. However, these new relations have not been met without consequence.

Concerning funding, the reality today is that government funding is becoming progressively more challenging and private corporations are increasingly becoming part of the international aid system. Corporations are a vital part of the social, political and economic landscape. As a consequence of the speed in which the private sector

transforms, it is becoming more difficult for NGOs to determine whether they are in collusion with socially and ethically responsible corporations or not. Agreements with the private sector may effect changes in the mission of the NGO, which are not in its best interests. For the private sector, there are many benefits associated with supporting NGOs. Private sector companies benefit from their associations with international NGOs by demonstrating their commitment to the goals and mission of the organization. This in turn generates good will within the community in which they operate, while also expanding the recognition and acceptance of their products.

The CFGB's relations with Agribusiness companies are a precarious one. This story has come at time when the Agribusiness Industry itself has been experiencing a lot of scrutiny regarding the impact of GMOs, both in the courts and according to public opinion. The Industry has been facing roadblocks concerning the safety of GM food products. One of the major problems is the fact that it is still too early to see any long-term effects on humans. Consequently, there has been a social uproar in many populations within the EU, Japan and many less industrialized countries that do not want GMO foodstuffs. Questions surrounding the proliferation of GMOs through food aid have been, and continue to be, an issue for the CFGB, however due to its dependence on the Agribusiness Industry's support to Growing Projects – it has remained silent.

Another significant part of the narrative relates to the influence of the government on the CFGB. Governments have diverse levels of influence that shape the organisational structure of NGOs by the imposition of restrictions and requirements on international development programmes. These restrictions are “rationalised myths”, which have been formed and sustained through means such as, public opinion, ideologies, government requirements, and so on. The end product has been the implied features and manufactured principles that construct the social reality surrounding NGOs in the battle against hunger.

The CFGB was motivated based on modern myths and symbols that are taken for granted as social practice. One of the main institutional myths associated with the case can be understood as the GoC's new “technological innovation” associated with recognising

nutrition as a legitimate method to tackle hunger. As the GoC, including its regulatory agencies, are some of the most significant sources of institutional structure, and are also the key suppliers of legitimacy, the push towards nutrition-based approaches could not be avoided by the CFGB.

Its conformity to the present-day myth regarding the inclusion of nutrition components in its programmes, as well as the increasing introduction of food security and advocacy types of programmes provides it with increased legitimacy. The majority of the NGOs in the sector have adopted these structural terms, which have become increasingly prevalent in the field. In spite of the fact the CFGB has been increasing its commitment to food aid programming, its adoption of nutrition programmes has secured its legitimacy in the eyes of the GoC. Overall, the CFGB's conformity to the elaboration of a particular set of rules and requirements in the field has enabled it to receive increased resources and legitimacy.

What's more, the whole concept of government-sponsored support for international development aid has also been in the midst of change. In the course of many years, the staff from NGOs, including the CFGB, has been noticing a trend where governments demand greater accountability in their funding arrangements, and require a larger role in reporting, monitoring, implementation and evaluation. Additionally, the government has increasingly been directing the types of programmes it will fund, such as development versus relief initiatives, or in areas where it has a particular interest, for instance in nutrition. Though these government-imposed changes may have been accepted under the guise of increased transparency, effectiveness and accountability in NGOs, the distinction between the interests of the government and the recipients of their projects still remains ambiguous.

Findings from the study also point to the fact that besides the relationship to the private and public sectors, there has also been recognition of the need for the CFGB to increase their support from the public. Segments of the farming sector make up the majority of support to the CFGB. Farming families have long enjoyed the tradition of giving support in the form of sharing one's crop with those less fortunate. At the same time, the farming

sector has been undergoing great difficulties, with the number of farming families steadily decreasing from year to year. The industrial agricultural model that has been adopted in most of the Prairie Provinces in Canada follows a corporate model of monocultures, biotechnology and external inputs. Thus, as the provision of food aid is so closely linked to the lifestyles of farmer's, conversation over stopping the practice of sharing food from Canada have been avoided. Furthermore, any discussions over the safety of foods originating in Canada and shipped overseas, be they GMOs, "fall on deaf ears".

Regarding the debate over the impact of the environment on the organization and vice versa, the problems facing the CFGB and other NGDOs involved in hunger alleviation, is not straightforward. The question of being a legitimate player in the battle against hunger, while at the same time being involved with a practice that is potentially harmful to food systems in vulnerable regions – is a complex one. The perceptions of actors not only within the organizational field but also the normative conceptions outside the field, has resulted in a turbulent environment for the organisation. Moreover, while the CFGB went to great lengths to improve its image through new communications strategies and educational opportunities, NDGOs and activists concerned with the "larger picture" advocated against this form of development strategy. Working towards realizing a world without hunger is a necessary and honourable endeavour – but it is one that requires changing the norms within the status quo.

The adoption of a doctrine or policy by the CFGB could be quite successful if it initiates a continuing exchange within the members of the organisation and between its assortments of constituencies. These conversations must encompass a continual practice of reviewing the principles of the organisation in light of changes taking place in Canada and the world. Regardless of whether or not the CFGB was founded on religious or moral principles, it does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it is infused with values, norms, practices and ways of behaving that are closely linked to Canadian cultural forces in its environment.

With the growing decline in funding to NGDOs, many creditable organisations committed to service provision in less industrialized countries have had to be restructured. In other words, associating with the private sector is indeed noteworthy opportunity to gain the vital resources needed to ensure a NGDOs survival. But the implications of these joint venture must then, thoroughly be examined. Does this association challenge the fundamental principles of the NGDO? Does associating with a controversial corporation afford it with reverence that a NGDO might want to circumvent? Making the best decisions for a NGDO can only come from within an organization. However, it is essential that each organisation examines it audience and comes to grips with these difficult questions.

There is an alternative, however. NGDOs that do not wish to be in the grips of external actors, who require timely bureaucratic reporting procedures, or an unwanted connection to, can attempt to be more self-sufficient. After considering the amount of time and energy involved in reaching the standards required or balancing agenda's, it may be in the best interest of an NGDO to cut the political and financial strings. As one programme officer remarked on their philosophy on funding, in relation to more independent forms of management,

“We try to move away from project based funding, as a small organization we know that we can get funding for this sexy piece of work but you might not be able to pay your rent ...We raise funds for the work ourselves. The kinds of support we provide - the financial support - is often viewed [by gov't] as the least important, but we only work with groups we have a common cause politically.” Program officer, NDGO1

Due to the assortment of constraints, restrictions and relationships that NGDOs are continually facing, another insight from the study revolves around the subject of internal and external pressures for change. The framework for understanding change did not afford a greater deal of pressure to either internal forces or external ones. However, an interesting feature in this case was that although the forces within an organisation can lead to changes within its structure, the primary forces of change reside outside the

organisation. The changing composition of personnel at the CFGB have certainly played a part in the new types of programmes offered by the NGDO, however changes have occurred at a higher rate when the force came from the international development aid donor's. This supports the notions that NGDO phenomenon centres, to a great extent, on the flow of resources for development assistance and the institutions that sustain the system.²⁹³

This study also reflects the importance of managing a constant balance between internal and external interests, especially where the environment is ripe with discord. It has been argued that the priorities of the CFGB has been, first, to ensure the continued economic support of the Agribusiness and its constituents by avoiding the discussion on food aid, and secondly to manage the relations with the government by compromising in the form of promoting nutrition components in its programmes. What this suggests is that, though the CFGB holds a crucial role in international development, its actions are premised on the same foundations as those of a firm.

Another interesting insight revealed in the study is the priority for the normative pressures for change, and also the nature of the normative influence. First of all, the pressures for change have been strongest in relation to normative pressures in the Canadian aid system in contrast to the regulative or cognitive institutional pressures. DiMaggio and Powell have provided a useful analytical frame to understand the different forces affecting organisations, however they do not suggest that one institutional force takes priority over another. In this study, it is not surprising that the main organisational influences on the CFGB have emerged primarily from the donors, with the NDGO sector playing a less significant, though nonetheless influencing role. But what is more interesting is the fact that the Members and their constituents have been the strongest force of change in the organisation, though they do not provide anywhere near the resource commitment of the GoC.

The parameters of this study did not include entering into the ethical dimensions of the decision-making processes of NGDOs. However, it must be mentioned that the moral concerns over GMOs in food aid are taking a low priority at the CFGB. It could be

argued that highly moral and religious organisations, would not accept any type of sponsorship from corporations that deal with the genetic manipulation of life forms. This is based on the notion, shared by many religious denominations, that this act leads to, or produces, an unnatural and precarious outcome, similar to the production of alcohol. In fairness, many of the members explained that their church has a position on this issue or is considering one, and went on to say that coming to an overall agreement at the CFGB was too complicated.

This raises an interesting question with regard to the perspectives of CFGB staff and their member church constituents. It could be very true that they feel passionately about distancing themselves from causes related to the manipulation of life – however, not extending this notion past *human* life forms. One staff member at the CFGB told me that he has worked with people that have experienced hunger, and whose families were touched by famine before immigrating to Canada – so for him stopping hunger, through whatever means, is the point. An area for further enquiry certainly.

It was especially interesting to note all the issues surrounding food aid as the means to ending hunger were not foreign to the personnel and management at the CFGB. Perhaps it is a mark of the times, which have pointed to the story of the CFGB and its controversial practices in the battle against hunger. An Ethiopian program officer from a Canadian NGDO exemplifies the situation,

“Where one has to go and save life, you don’t have to establish the cycle of institutionalisation of relief and aid. My view is that food aid has lots of impact, mainly on the conservation and sustainability of genetic diversity, particularly in the centre of diversity where agriculture originates. Where all this genetic diversity [is], even here in the surplus producing countries. So if we’re going to displace these ones then the whole food supply system, basically the human race, is in jeopardy and vulnerable. So it’s not a question of a third world issue, it’s everybody’s issue.” Program officer, NGDO3

The CFGB, with its foundation as a religious organisation with the moral responsibility to provide worthwhile development assistance, seems to have prioritised organisational survival. This has been understood in different ways. Chiefly, the organisation's interest in maintaining this strategy is that it represents a tradition, rooted in the scriptures, and enjoyed and respected among many rural Canadians. Secondly, by its commitment to increasing food in light of its controversies, especially concerning the proliferation of GMOs, it remains outside the debate in order to maintain positive relations with both its constituents and the Agribusiness Industry.

It is liable that the intrinsic nature of the case of the CFGB, through the mixture of local, national and international contexts, as well as corporate, religious and publicly based associations - make this a unique case. It may also be unique, in the sense that at the time of the fieldwork, the global debate over GMOs was especially heated. It could be interesting to see if perspectives and behaviours in NGDOs have changed in light of the increasing proliferation, acceptance and denial of GMO, since the time of the fieldwork. It could also be interesting to examine whether other NGDOs, in different national contexts have come under the same scrutinizing lens or if there was a "blind" acceptance of food aid to fight hunger. In this context, it would be exciting to see how other NGDOs have managed their situation – did they survive – did they prosper?

It has been suggested that NGDOs are in a constant state of reinventing themselves and their programmes to accommodate for the shifting political and economic priorities of donors while trying to manage the needs of recipients.²⁹⁴ In light of the increasingly turbulent environment associated with providing food aid, the CFGB has been going to great lengths to stay within the parameters of what can be considered legitimate. By introducing food security and advocacy types of programmes to their organisational strategy, as well as aligning with NGDO working groups, they have maintained a positive status within the sector. In relation to their constituents and the Agribusiness industry, it primarily entails the continued support for food aid, and avoiding the increasingly heated issue of GMOs. Finally, by promoting nutrition-based approaches, it is able to maintain positive relations with the shifting international priorities of the GoC in relation to fighting hunger.

Reflections on the Fieldwork Experience

Prior to this dissertation, I had, had only one experience in conducting fieldwork and it was based solely on generating data through a survey method. Therefore, in entering the field as a novice I was advised to simply “collect as much data as possible!” I have avoided giving a label to the particular type of approach adopted upon entering the field, as it lies somewhere between ethnography and an interpretivist approach. Regardless, what I have come to appreciate, and what I was quite unprepared for, is that it *is* possible to get too much information in relation to a certain individual. On more than once occasion, I was confronted with less than flattering information concerning a specific individual in the study. This information presented personal challenges in terms of my own interaction with the individual and has been a constant test of my morals.

The role that a researcher plays in the field is significant in the type and scope of information she is able to access. My experience in this area is somewhat of a “mixed bag”. In relation to the NGDO sector, where the majority of interviews occurred, it was exciting to see the speed in which rapport can be built. I firmly believe that his was not only due to having the “right personality” but also the fact that I went to lengths to demonstrate my interest by meeting with particular NDGOs on more than one occasion and by being present during sector-wide activities. Furthermore, I found it reassuring those academics, researchers and Ph.D. fellows’ alike made time in their busy schedules to meet with me.

This openness also extended to my preliminary experiences at the CFGB, although it did not last. Initially, I was impressed with the quick pace in which I was accepted at the organisation. Oddly enough, I believe the fact that I am originally from the region played a part in encouraging a trusting relationship between particular staff and myself. However, what was most interesting to me was that that as quick as I developed rapport with the organisation, it was also taken away. I expect that this was associated with the lengthy period of time in which the study was conducted and the stressed NGDO environment, in addition to the fact that I created insecurity by not revealing a great deal

on the nature of my research. It must be said, that I was naïve about the extent of the power a researcher to invoke fear - an important lesson to social researchers indeed.

An interesting and reoccurring issue during this study concerns the ease in which particular actors can be accessed and the roadblocks a researcher encounters when trying to contact others. Admittedly, in dealing with the federal government a discourse analysis approach would have been more fruitful. However, concerning NGDOs it is perhaps no wonder that they were happy to share their stories about international development programming and organisational histories, with a social researcher clearly interested in international development. However I did find the ease in which NGDOs throughout the sector would “bend over backwards” in terms of time and energy, in contrast to the extreme difficulties in simply making contact with the government to be very interesting. This phenomenon does not seem unique to this case, but rather an indication of a larger reality.

Concerning the issue of choices for generating data that were made prior to leaving for fieldwork, I have come to realise the significance of the normative influences of your own environment and the impact they have in the research design process. During the initial design process, I felt that I had taken a non-biased approach to understanding the research problems I was seeking to discover based on in-depth enquiry into the conceptual issues and theoretical frameworks of the field. However, I had placed a lot of emphasis on the issue of GMOs in food aid and the interests of the private sector as a main driving force in the CFGB’s persistent commitment to food aid. It was not until I entered the field that I became aware of a potential bias on my part versus the private sector, and resulted in a re-evaluation of the design. In hindsight, I can see that the spotlight on the GM issue was a symptom of the momentum that the issue had achieved in the media and in the academic discourse at the time.

The aforementioned reflection also points to the ‘explorative integration’ approach that has proven to be so very relevant in qualitative research and in this dissertation. The practice of starting out, grounded in a particular theoretical construct, then generating data, reflecting on the data and further developing the theoretical frame, has been key to

examining the CFGB. It is also in line with the notion that understanding an organisation takes time, so by exploring and integrating the data as it presents itself, the construction of knowledge becomes possible.

I have come to better understand the need for time and continual interaction within a research setting when attempting to understand the intricacies of an organisation and its behaviour. In all, had I only gone to the lengths of collecting data through semi-structured interviewing, a less dynamic and less colourful perspective would have emerged.

Within the same context, I also became aware of the importance of the researcher being actively engaged with the participants she is investigating. It came to light during the interview situation, although many respondents provided a rounded picture, others were less candid. It was not that they were consciously attempting to convey a less accurate story, just that in an interview situation there is the possibility of citing particular viewpoints that may not, in fact, be reflected in their actions. Though one can never be entirely certain of the validity of information provided during the interaction between individuals, had I only generated knowledge through the interview process, the possibility of misrepresenting data would have been higher.

Another important reflection concerns the rationale associated with using an approach to collecting data founded on the combination of documentary analysis, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. This combined method proved to be invaluable in examining the CFGB. My perspective on the organisation was continually de-constructed and re-constructed as a result of the variety of information presented. Though it has been shown that a significant portion of the knowledge constructed in the study emerged from the qualitative interview, this does not do justice to the transformations in my perspective of the NGDO, which occurred as a result of being in the field. My perspective on the CFGB went through countless adjustments with each interaction with the social reality surrounding the organisation.

During my visit to the head office, the daily routines of the personnel, informal and formal conversations and having access to office documents, provided a rich and detailed

picture of the organisation. However, this was only the beginning of the story of the organisation. After having the opportunity to attend two of the National Food Security Conferences, where I could assess the relevance of the CFGB personnel who were and were not attending, their interaction with actors in the field, and the perspectives they were promoting - a new story began to unfold. Thereafter, and most significantly, was the opportunity to take part in the one-month Food Study Tour, where I was invited to live, eat and breathe with CFGB staff. The more I interacted with the reality of the CFGB staff, through observing, discussing and participating in their work, the deeper and more genuine the perspective on the organisation developed.

As with any research endeavour there are limitations in relation to funding and time, which limit the space a researcher has in the field. Though the connection between Canadian farming families and the aim of this study is not explicitly linked, it nonetheless represents an interesting area for future enquiries. Another such area is to focus more in-depth is the issue of the CFGB's religious underpinnings in relation to the rest of the NGDOs sector. Unfortunately, I came into contact with the growing interest in the distinctness of religious NGDOs in the international aid system after returning from my fieldwork experience and consequently decided that it was unreasonable to introduce this interesting dimension at such a late stage.

The findings in the dissertation may not be surprising to researchers dealing with NGDOs, development assistance and the international aid system. However, I hope that it has offered some interesting insights into NGDO planning and preferences concerning funding relationship, with current and potential donors in the international aid system. Whether the funds originate from an actor that is deemed controversial, or whether they have strict requirements associated with funding, or if the challenge is more fundamentally inspired - NGDOs must not shy away from reflexively and critically asking themselves the difficult questions on the effects of establishing links with donors. No matter the context, any NGDO requires social and financial support to be successful - however, it is the nature and the amount of support that is the big question.

The CFGB was created as a force to end global hunger. In light of the ever-tightening and convoluted grip of the international aid system, there may be a need to create guidelines for future funding arrangements. The first step in this process entails re-visiting the reason for which the NGDO was established and to critically reflect on the implications associated with its current and future partners in international development.

Though there were many different perspectives on responding to hunger, I continue to be overwhelmed by the level of commitment of the CFGB staff, the field staff overseas and this group of Canadian NGDOs. The dozens that I have the pleasure of meeting and the ones I'm still in contact with are morally committed, passionate and dedicated to raising awareness and support for this devastating global problem. The difficult question to consider is with all this interest in ending global hunger – why is it continuously increasing?

²⁸⁷ DiMaggio & Powell 1991

²⁸⁸ DiMaggio & Powell 1991

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*

²⁹⁰ Selznick 1957

²⁹¹ Selznick 1957

²⁹² Oliver 1991

²⁹³ Lewis, D. *op.cit* "The Management.. (2001); Fowler 2000d

²⁹⁴ Fowler 2000d.

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Table I. Summary of Interview Process with Type of Actor, Position & Location

Type of Actor	Organisation/Company	Position	Address
Focal NGDO	Canadian Foodgrains Bank	Resources Assistant Hunger Education Coordinator Policy Officer Logistics Officer Executive Director Senior Policy Advisor Program Officer Policy Analyst Program Officer Resource Director	Winnipeg, MB
Private sector	Monsanto	Communication Officer	Winnipeg, MB
		Geneticist	Winnipeg, MB
	Agricore United	Communication Officer	Winnipeg, MB
Members	Mennonite Central Committee	Program Officer	Winnipeg, MB
	PWS&D	Program Officer	Arusha, Tanzania
Government	CIDA - PAHMDI	Food Aid Committee	Hull, QC
Canadian NGDOs	Inter Pares	Program Officer	Ottawa, ON
	Rights & Democracy	Program Officer	Montreal, QC
	ETC Group	Executive Director	Ottawa, ON
	USC Canada	Program Officer	Ottawa, ON
	Union Paysanne Agricole	Program Officer	Longueuil, QC
	Partners in Rural Development	Program Officer	Ottawa, ON
	Dev. Countries Farm Radio Network	Program Officer	Ottawa, ON
	Micronutrient Initiative	Asia Office Director	New Delhi, India
	CCIC		Ottawa, ON
	KAIROS	Program Officer	Toronto, ON
	Grain	Researcher/writer	Montreal, PQ
Cdn. For-profit Org.	Agriteam	Agricultural Specialist	Ottawa, ON
Academics	Ryerson University	Food Policy Analyst, PhD	Toronto, ON
	Ryerson University	Food Policy Analyst, PhD	Toronto, ON

	Ramshorn Newsletter	Food Policy Analyst, Researcher	Sorrento, BC
	University of Manitoba	PhD Fellow	Winnipeg, MB
Public-constituents	Farmer	Farmer	Ashville, MB
	Farmer	Growing Project Coordinator	Minnedosa, MB
	Farmer	Growing Project Coordinator	Winnipegosis, MB
Inter'l Dev. Org.	CARE East Africa	Regional Director	Nairobi, Kenya
	WFP Kenya	Program Officer	Nairobi, Kenya
Member in field	CRWRC	E. Africa Coordinator	Nairobi, Kenya
	ADRA	Country Representative Tanzania	Arusha, Tanzania
	MCC	Country Representative Kenya	Nairobi, Kenya
	MCC	Country Representative Burundi	Nairobi, Kenya
Partner	AICT Shinyanga	Program Officer	Shinyanga, Tanz