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Idle Hands Are The Devil's Tools:

The Geopolitics and Geoeconomics of Hunger

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Abstract

In current geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses, hunger is understood as both a threat to be contained, resulting in an often severe social and spatial localization of food insecurity, and a humanitarian problem to be solved through diffuse global flows of food and other aid. The resulting scalar tensions demonstrate the potentially contradictory alignment of geopolitics and geoeconomics within processes of globalization and neoliberalization. This article examines the geopolitical and geoeconomic place of hunger and the hungry through a critical analysis of the food-for-work (FFW) approach to combating hunger. FFW programs distribute food aid in exchange for labor, and have long been used to plan and deliver food aid. While debate continues as to whether and under what conditions FFW programs are socially and economically just, governments, international institutions, and NGOs tout them as a flexible and efficient way to deliver targeted aid, promote community development, and improve long-term prospects for economic development and food security. In the post-9/11 period, FFW programs are also cited as effective deterrents to terrorist recruitment strategies, while development and food security more broadly have been incorporated into national security strategies, especially but not only in the United States. The food-for-work approach attempts to resolve the scalar contradictions of hunger through the imposition of a labor requirement that disciplines the threat of the hungry while enforcing global connection. Case studies of FFW programs in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Indonesia illustrate this contradiction, and highlight the development and possible future of approaches to hunger under neoliberal geopolitics.

Key Words: food security, geopolitics, geoeconomics, hunger

Despite decades of international efforts to eradicate chronic hunger and malnutrition, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2008, 6) stated in its most recent global food insecurity report that over 923 million people were chronically hungry in 2007. This figure represents an increase of 75 million more hungry and undernourished people over the 2003–2005 period, and demonstrates the severity of the global food crisis that began in 2007 with skyrocketing fuel and food costs. This crisis put hunger and the global food system at the forefront of political attention around the world. At the same time, development and food security have become central parts of national security and geopolitical strategies, attempts to salvage and even extend the liberalization of international agricultural trade continue, and aid agencies both public and private search for new paradigms and modalities of aid delivery. The confluence of these trends presents a pressing need for an examination of hunger and the hungry in modern geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses. These portray hunger as a political, economic, and social threat to be contained through an often severe social and spatial localization of food insecurity, and as a humanitarian and logistical problem to be resolved through diffuse global flows of food and other aid. The resulting scalar tensions reverberate from the bodies of the hungry to national security strategies to international markets and back again, and demonstrate the sometimes contradictory alignment of geopolitical and geoeconomic interests and practices across and between scales.

This article submits these scalar tensions to critical scrutiny, focusing on the positioning of hunger and the hungry within dominant geostrategic discourses, and the role of food-for-work programs within these. I begin by outlining contemporary geopolitical and geoeconomic constructions of hunger, focusing especially on the potentially contradictory place of hunger and the hungry within these intertwined geostrategic logics, and the neoliberalization of food aid and anti-hunger strategies. The U.S. state and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) are strategically central to this discussion. Although private aid has outgrown official (i.e., state) assistance, food aid and anti-hunger strategies are anchored to official assistance programs, of which those administered by the U.S. and the WFP are the world's largest and most important. The global food aid architecture remains attuned to U.S. interests and strategic priorities and the WFP's brand of expertise and humanitarianism. Understandings of and approaches to hunger outlined by the U.S. government and the WFP present a suitable if incomplete proxy for making generalizations about the place of hunger and the hungry in dominant geopolitical and

geoeconomic discourses and practices.

I next examine the food-for-work (FFW) approach to combating hunger in this strategic and geographical context. FFW programs operate by distributing food aid in exchange for labor, typically on public works and infrastructure projects, and comprise a key modality for programming and delivering food aid. They are used extensively by the WFP and NGOs implementing U.S. food aid, and are touted as a cost-effective, flexible, and socially just use of food aid to achieve improved food security, development progress, and enhanced national security, all of which are connected quite directly in official national security strategies and discourses (White House 2006). Because these claims are open to debate, FFW programs present a useful case for examining the position of hunger and the hungry as geopolitical threats. Further, because agricultural trade has been increasingly liberalized, exposing food security and household subsistence to market logic and global volatility, hunger and the hungry have also achieved geoeconomic importance, as impediments and threats to neoliberalized global flows of food commodities. The hungry make potentially disruptive moral and political claims that impinge on trade openness and the treatment of food as a commodity like any other (McMichael 2003; Young 2004). The food-for-work approach attempts to resolve the scalar tensions of contemporary hunger through the imposition of a labor requirement that disciplines the threat of the hungry while enforcing global connection.

I rely on three case study examples of WFP- and U.S.-backed FFW programs, in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Indonesia, to demonstrate the development of the FFW approach within contemporary geostrategic discourses and practices. These cases comprise not only three specific and strategically important moments in the evolution and deployment of the FFW model, but also the more general historical and geographical development of neoliberal geopolitics and its mapping of hunger and the hungry. The first case, Bangladesh's national FFW program, illustrates how FFW was both a vehicle for and an impediment to the early development of neoliberal geopolitics in the 1970s and early 1980s. The Ethiopia example highlights the transition between the primacy of geopolitics and geoeconomics at the end of the cold war and into the period of the Washington Consensus. The final case, an urban FFW program in Jakarta, Indonesia, demonstrates the reassertion and articulation of geopolitical concerns alongside the geoeconomic. These concerns are tied to fears of terrorism, fragile states, and underdevelopment in the period just before and since 11 September 2001 (hereinafter

"9/11"), and the place of hunger, the hungry, and civil society in these. I conclude by considering the problems FFW poses for humanitarian institutions and the hungry in the context of the ongoing development of neoliberal geopolitics and geoeconomics.

Placing Hunger and the Hungry

In a September 2008 speech before the Women's Foreign Policy Group in Washington, the executive director of the WFP, Josette Sheeran (2008, 2), stated that "[w]ithout food, societies become breeding grounds for instability, civil unrest, terrorism and demagogues. We have learned that food is not just a soft power issue but also a hard power issue." Such statements have become *de rigueur* in both official and popular discussions of hunger and food insecurity. These position hunger as part of a broader terrain of poverty and underdevelopment on which social and political ills "breed," a contingent but potent precondition for disorder and turmoil (USAID 2005a; Karon 2008; Brown 2009; U.S. Department of State 2009; see also Boland 2000; Falcon and Naylor 2005). Hunger provides space and leverage for warlords, terrorists, and dictators to manipulate or control the hungry and vulnerable, and to influence regional stability and international interests. For this reason, hunger (and poverty more generally) is not to be addressed with "soft power" alone (e.g., food aid and development assistance), but also with "hard power," the threat and use of physical force, particularly to the degree hunger is potentially enmeshed in wider networks of terrorism, criminal activity, and political manipulation. Even as Sheeran (2008, 13) outlined in the remainder of her speech an approach to combating hunger relying almost entirely on soft power mechanisms, she reiterated the notion that a fate worse than hunger waits in the wings, arguing that without immediate action, "we risk ceding the field to extremist groups that do not share the values of liberty, freedom, and human dignity."

This statement provides an indication of the place hunger holds, and has held, in the geostrategic imagination of key policymakers, international institutions, and development practitioners. Combating hunger meets both humanitarian and geopolitical objectives, preserving the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of the individual and preserving international order and domestic peace. On the other hand, failure to alleviate widespread and chronic hunger gives rise to geopolitical disorder and humanitarian crises, simultaneously undermining rights and stability. The standard approach to eradicating hunger and improving food security globally that has

emerged over the last three decades has emphasized protecting and enhancing the "entitlement bundle" of the poor and food insecure, including access to available food and the means to procure it, as well as other capabilities, commodities, networks, and access points that individuals and households can command (Sen 1983, 1999; Watts 1983, 2000; Watts and Bohle 1993).

Huish (2008, 1390) points out that the concomitant policy consensus on food security has emphasized the management of risk and vulnerability in access to and availability of food, though this approach "has a long way to go in creating broader structural changes" in either the globalizing food system or the political and economic mechanisms that protect and expand entitlements.[1] Failure to enact such structural changes means that "current academic definitions of food security continue to use the policy language of accessibility," while many critics of food security and the global food and development aid architecture have moved into discussions of food sovereignty and food justice (Huish 2008, 1392; see McMichael 2003; Allen 2008; Rosset 2008). Such a shift provides fertile ground for making connections between food justice movements in the developing world, where concerns over land rights, access to food, and peasant livelihoods and cultures are paramount, and those in the developed world, especially those focused on environmental sustainability, urban planning and poverty in relation to food, and food system localization (Koc et al. 1999; Winter 2003; Wekerle 2004; Levkoe 2006; Guthman 2008; Pudup 2008; Jackson, Ward, and Russell 2009).

Within this increasingly vocal and well-organized consensus on the necessity and urgency of food justice and democracy remain important distinctions between vulnerability, hunger, and the hungry in different places. As Kearns and Reid-Henry (2009, 556) argue in examining the relationship between discourses of biopower, bioethics, and the "politics of life itself," and the uneven structuring of life chances and "vital geographies" that occurs through associated political economic practices and institutions, "the value of life in some places is predicated on the non-value of life elsewhere." While acknowledging the crudeness of this observation, they employ it to focus calls for social justice on the geographical conditions that structure and limit vitality and life opportunities. Kearns and Reid-Henry (2009, 559) demonstrate how the deep politicization of life conditions and knowledges (e.g., regarding health, terrorism and violence, or food and hunger) demands operationalization, which "involves particular sorts of spatial ordering and control," including "confinement of individuals in place,"

or interventions into places and bodies which open them to broader networks of calculation, control, and order. As Young (2004, 14) points out in analyzing food security's uneven footing within neoliberal globalization, evidence strongly confirms that food security in the Global South has been "compromised by the exposure to volatile world prices and reduced domestic food production." The intensive neoliberalization of food systems over the last two decades has thus entailed a fundamental restructuring of food security, resulting in greater vulnerability to hunger and a severe geographical reordering of life chances for the hungry.

This reordering falls particularly hard on the vulnerable and hungry who find themselves in geostrategically undesirable and dangerous locales. In a world populated by terrorists and other extremists, dominant geostrategic discourses assert that justice, sovereignty, and security, as well as food entitlements commanded by the poor, are threatened by ideological capture and political manipulation. Hunger's presence as a manifestation of vulnerability represents both the actual existence of risk to geopolitical order, and the failure to appropriately manage or control such risk, with potential repercussions across the entire world economic and political system. Accordingly, localized hunger presents a global threat and must be contained geographically and socially. The positioning of hunger as a wellspring of terrorist and criminal danger and a basis for geographical differentiation, allows the categorization of hungry people and places as threats to stand in for a more thorough analysis of the intertwined dynamics of hunger, poverty, and instability in a world defined increasingly by economic interdependence and connection.

Here the difference between geopolitics and geoeconomics presents a basis for analyzing contradiction in contemporary anti-hunger discourse and practice. Sparke and Lawson (2007, 318) argue that geoeconomics and its "assumptions about the need to position communities most competitively" in a globalizing economic and social system defined more by networks of knowledge, trade, and investment than by strict central state territorial control, has become "a newly dominant mode of articulating and mapping the global–local interface in political discourse." In this articulation of global–local connection, geoeconomics contrast and mesh with geopolitics, though seeing the former as purely economic and the latter as purely political would oversimplify both. A primary concern and objective of geoeconomics is "building international partnerships that advance 'harmonization,' 'efficiency,' 'economic leverage' and 'growth' against the supposed threats of political 'radicalism,' 'anachronism' and 'anarchy'" (Sparke and Lawson 2007, 316). The particular projects, networks, and discourses associated with

contemporary geoeconomics, particularly the pursuit of neoliberalized regulatory and trade regimes, are profoundly politicized. These are typically juxtaposed against alternative networks and arrangements constituting disorderly and anarchic regimes disconnected from the logic and direction of the "entrepreneurial elites" and experts that populate consulting firms, state institutions, including security apparatuses, and corporations.

Sparke (2007, 340) argues, therefore, that while both geopolitics and geoeconomics are forms of geostrategic discourse, and co-exist and often reinforce one another in specific but sometimes untenable ways, "the imaginative geographies of geoeconomics differ from those of geopolitics because they enable the imagination of an expanding economic flatness … offering a hope of transcending the divisions and correcting the failures" emphasized and acted upon by geopolitics. This critical attention to coeval but competing geostrategic discourses should be applied to the specific issue of global hunger. It is the potentially contradictory tension between different geostrategic mappings of hunger and the hungry, and the particular programs and strategies called upon to simultaneously resolve this tension *and* combat hunger, that presents a useful locus for investigation, and for constructing alternative geostrategic discourses and practices. Indeed, the prevailing geoeconomic view of hunger presents a rather different image than the geopolitical. Geoeconomically, hunger comprises a failure of state and markets to adequately protect poor individuals' entitlements, with appropriate solutions reliant on the "proper" functioning of both markets and civil society within and across scales. Hunger thus is best addressed through openness to global economic flows, facilitated by state action, implemented by NGOs and other private organizations, and resulting in well-supplied markets connected to global networks of capital, trade, technology and expertise (U.S. Congress 2008; Lugar 2009).[2]

The neoliberalization of development aid, agricultural production and trade, and food security and entitlements, are influential processes shaping contemporary geoeconomics and its intersection with geopolitics. Contentious debates about the neoliberalization of food and development aid are ongoing, and hold the potential for disrupting currently dominant practices and institutions directing food aid and food security policies. Such debates stem from disputes over the appropriate scale of food procurement and provisioning, demonstrated by persistent divisions within and around the WTO regarding further liberalization of agricultural trade, and recent efforts to reduce or end the monetization of U.S. food aid, "the sale of food aid on local

markets in developing countries to generate funds for development projects" (Murphy and McAfee 2005, 29).[3] Geoeconomics as a strategic discourse shaping the character and content of global-local connections is not totally or necessarily neoliberal, but is facilitated by a neoliberal imagining of the world as a flat surface of connection, and by the material neoliberalization of such connection (Peck 2001a; Castree 2006). As Roberts, Secor, and Sparke (2003, 887) argue in identifying "the intellectual importance of studying how neoliberal marketization dynamics are hybridized and supplemented by various extraeconomic forces," those outside the globalizing economic system (whether by choice or circumstance) become potential risks, presenting important sites of convergence and contradiction in geostrategic imaginaries and practice.

The geographies of hunger and anti-hunger resulting from the hybridization of contemporary geoeconomics and geopolitics must be understood as embodied and not just theoretical visions of a world order never put into practice. The production of hunger necessitates embodiment of what is otherwise an abstract, universalist rendering of a particular condition of existence that is the product of multiple complex material processes. Hunger as an abstract object of control, aid, and development lacks sufficient heft to be useful in actual development programming. To truly "combat" hunger, as anti-hunger and various development and food aid programs attempt to do, hunger must be embodied as a real condition present in the lives and relations of actual people. This may seem quite obvious, since hunger does not exist outside of the hungry, but such embodment presents difficulties because the *threat* of hunger as geopolitical and geoeconomic risk is also embodied in the hungry. Combating and solving hunger may therefore trample or constrain rights, disrupt or curtail entitlements, or expose the hungry to processes, flows, and relations that produce or exacerbate aspects of their vulnerability other than hunger.

It is equally important here not to treat hunger and the hungry as products of ironclad laws of physical nature (i.e., the effect of insufficient production rooted in environmental scarcity) or social nature (i.e., the result of essential moral or social defects such as laziness, greed, or rent-seeking behavior). Doing so would ignore the production of hunger and the hungry, and the vital spaces they inhabit and make, as structural features of the worlds made through geostrategic discourses (Kearns and Reid-Henry 2009). Hunger has been a constant in human societies, and the hungry have appeared in virtually every historical period in various forms and numbers, with widely divergent claims on social consumption and consciousness.

Hunger and the hungry as objects of contemporary political control specifically in need of neoliberalized and securitized forms of aid, expertise, and connectivity, however, do not predate neoliberal geopolitics. In other words, hunger may be universally observable (geographically and historically), but this does not mean it is experienced the same way in every place or time, or that it always the result of processes unbounded from time, space, and the constraints of dominant geostrategic discourses that condition its social context. Under neoliberal geopolitics, the hungry are represented as suffering from social and economic disconnectedness, unable to exercise entitlements, and prone to political and social unrest. This mapping of the hungry as vulnerable, potentially threatening bodies is completed by the geographical production and reproduction of those places in which hungry bodies reside. As Orzeck (2007, 504) argues, the specifically capitalist production of the body as a contradictory site for fixing both sameness and difference in the pursuit of accumulation is analogous to the uneven development of capitalism across space, so that "[j]ust as capitalism requires the ability to leverage different spaces against one other, so too does it appear to require the ability to leverage different bodies—all of which have been equalized just enough to be vulnerable to differentiation—against one another." The production, reproduction, and mapping of the hungry under neoliberal geopolitics, as bodies and spaces marked by a condition both universal and differentiated, demonstrate this tendency well.

It is crucial in this context to historicize anti-hunger strategies and discourses, with particular reference to the ways in which they map hungry people and places onto and through geostrategic discourses. Again, it is important not to simplify geoeconomics to its contemporary neoliberal form, or geopolitics to the current focus on controlling risks posed by terrorists, rogue states, and non-integrated places and populations. While such foci loom large in contemporary anti-hunger strategies, these have also developed and often remain rooted in institutions and modalities built from past geostrategic discourses and practices. The tensions between overlapping, residual, and emergent geostrategic mappings shape the potentially contradictory processes highlighted here. Hunger, like "disease, asylum seekers, transnational crime, [and] terrorism," poses "ill-defined, geographically diffuse threats … all ostensibly linked through a global web of risk," provoking similarly contradictory reactions that pull in opposing but unified directions, one universalizing and one differentiating (Hyndman 2007, 367). Universalizing reactions typically seek openness and economic connection, facilitated by free trade and global distribution of food aid, while differentiation occurs through the sociospatial confinement of

hunger and the disciplinary localization of the hungry. Such opposing reactions are underwritten by the mobilization of fear. Risk is thus "managed on the one hand through neoliberal policies of aid and trade that engender security and prosperity and on the other through policies of securitization built on tropes of threat that inculcate fear" (Hyndman 2007, 368).

In the geostrategic discourses that form the corpus of neoliberal geopolitics, fear and securitization, translocal connection and economic prosperity, universality and differentiation, appear side by side as mutually reinforcing and imminently necessary, with contradictory tensions ignored, displaced, or resolved through force. The hungry both have moral standing as humans with an inalienable right to the conditions of existence, *and* present threatening examples of the failures of geopolitics to adequately assess and manage risk and vulnerability. A particular scalar tension thus lies at the heart of resulting attempts to address the threat of hunger and the hungry under neoliberal geopolitics: Namely, the geoeconomic solution of greater openness to flows of food commodities and aid does not neatly fit with a geopolitical response emphasizing sociospatial containment and disciplining of the hungry. USAID (2005a), for example, has suggested that reducing vulnerability to global economic shocks that may affect food prices and livelihoods should be the focus of aid, rather than simply improving aggregate food security measures. On the other hand, the agency has also stated that the most recent global food crisis challenges the institutional responses used to address past crises, which "had clear geographic footprints, limited durations, and relatively homogenous affected populations" (USAID 2008, 7). By contrast, the most recent global food crisis "is less localized and rural, and therefore is having a broader impact" than previous crises, with civil unrest and food riots in Haiti, Egypt, Indonesia, Cameroon, and Peru suggesting that the food economy's global character presents a global security threat as well; most problematic is the way such unrest "is increasingly manifesting itself in urban settings with potential national security consequences," complicating humanitarian responses (USAID 2008, 8). It is therefore crucial to consider the contradictory relationship between global openness and local containment in geostrategic mappings of hunger. The next section addresses this through an examination of food-for-work programs just prior to and into the current phase of neoliberal geopolitics.

Food-for-Work as Neoliberal Geopolitics

Numerous modalities of food aid programming and delivery exist, but with the increasing dominance and pervasiveness of neoliberal geopolitics, the food-for-work (FFW) model presents the most useful starting point for critical analysis of shifts in geostrategic discourses and the operationalization of these in relation to hunger and the hungry. This is not due to the overwhelming prevalence of FFW within food aid programs, nor is it the by-product of an all-encompassing and seamless application of neoliberal ideology to food aid and anti-hunger strategies. Rather, I concentrate on the food-for-work approach because it most clearly reflects and enacts the contradictory tension between geoeconomic and geopolitical logics, presenting a useful vehicle for re-evaluating the relationship between deservedness, rights, and hunger, and offering opportunities for countering neoliberal geopolitics. The food-for-work model operates on the principle of disbursing food aid in exchange for labor, usually on infrastructure and public works projects, and predates the current period of neoliberalization. Indeed, the workhouses of early industrial Britain functioned on the principle of food-for-work, as did many British famine "relief" programs in colonial India, as the impoverished and starving were granted food relief on the condition of hard labor, which they were typically unfit to perform because of the debilitating effects of starvation (Davis 2001; Vernon 2007). Contemporary iterations of FFW are not as brutal as these examples, and are seen as ideal for addressing the needs of the poorest and most food insecure because of such programs' "self-targeting" mechanism. FFW programs are designed to attract only those who cannot find work elsewhere, or who need immediate food assets, though this is dependent on "the (low) quality of subsidized foodstuff, queuing to receive transfers, or a work requirement that carries a high opportunity cost of time for the relatively better-off" (Barrett and Maxwell 2005, 144).

Payment of wages in the form of food aid supposedly meets this requirement, though setting wage rates for specific FFW projects remains difficult. Barrett and Maxwell (2005, 144) point to ample evidence "that many nonpoor participate in FFW schemes," due to inappropriately high wage rates, or planning, supervisory, and distribution structures that encourage undue influence and control by local elites. Even though, as Edkins (2000, 94) explains, "FFW is not intended as a substitute for other means of local employment and should never compete with the local labor market," in practice such division is difficult to enforce. Edkins (2000) argues, however, that FFW's popularity is due less to the concrete and practical

outcomes of such projects in the form of better environmental management, public infrastructure, and lasting improvements in food security (especially since measurable outcomes are often modest) than to the disciplinary effects on hungry populations the FFW model produces. Despite the many limitations donor and implementing agencies place on project selection, the "practice of food for work emphasizes the need for input and commitment from the participants," who are constituted through program practice and institutional relations as "unemployed and in need of reform," which comes through their labor contribution (Edkins 2000, 92).

Indeed, the fact that the hungry have their immediate food needs met through the expenditure of labor on projects chosen, planned, and organized through the institutional networks of power and expertise that plan and deliver food aid is crucial. As Edkins (2000, 92) notes, no small part of "the enthusiasm for food for work programs on the part of donors arises from the assumption that otherwise people would sit around doing nothing." FFW thus works in two ways, first constructing a hungry population in need of a particular form of intervention that both alleviates their hunger *and* provides gainful economic opportunities, and second by creating the necessity for a bureaucratic administrative structure to program, implement, calculate, supervise, and monitor this intervention (Edkins 2000, 97; cf. Essex 2009). FFW programs deployed under the rubric of neoliberal geopolitics therefore also require the deeper involvement in geostrategic discourse and practice of what de Waal (1997, 3-4) calls the "humanitarian international," or "the cosmopolitan elite of relief workers, officials of donor agencies, consultant academics" and others propagating "the humanitarian worldview." The widespread state offloading of aid programming and delivery to NGOs and other non-state humanitarian and development institutions, in conjunction with the prevalence of fears of networked risks like terrorism, environmental and epidemiological catastrophe, and general political disorder, alerts us once more to the unevenness structured into life chances and, specifically, the operation of FFW. The coupling of humanitarian with geostrategic concerns about the way hunger sets conditions for the "instability, civil unrest, terrorism and demagogues" outlined by WFP director Sheeran indicates that the threat the hungry pose, and that donors envision, is not indolence. Rather, the most problematic underlying threat is political challenge, from both the hungry themselves and the institutions charged with identifying and managing them, highlighting the contradictions and limits of neoliberal geopolitics and the uneven impact of its contradictions.

The old adage that "idle hands are the devil's tools" thus seems more apt as a description of donor attitudes and fears.

Given that many donors and implementing agencies view FFW as a useful way to incorporate local and recipient input, to clearly target aid and reduce waste and graft, and to provide badly needed food assets to the poorest and most vulnerable, while also circumventing efforts by terrorists and demagogues to manipulate the hungry, it is important to examine the prevalence of FFW within aid delivery. Surprisingly, comprehensive statistics are in short supply. Shaw and Clay (1993, 226) cite a 1990 study stating that in FY 1989, the U.S. programmed 15 percent of its primary food aid budget (PL 480 Title II, or Food for Peace) as FFW, with two-thirds going to Asia (especially Bangladesh, see below), the Middle East, and North Africa, and the remainder to Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Use of FFW within U.S. food aid programs is dependent in part on the decisions of those agencies contracted to implement aid budgeted and allocated by state institutions (primarily USAID and the Department of Agriculture), although the tangled web of international civil society and private voluntary groups involved in the aid process makes accounting difficult. Scattered evidence from secondary sources and official reports indicates that the U.S. government views FFW as a useful and efficient means to combat hunger in isolated rural areas and post-conflict situations (Garst and Barry 1990; Anderson 1999; USAID 2005b). Similarly, the WFP cites food-for-work as one of its primary and most successful modes of aid delivery, particularly in areas where markets function poorly. Former WFP head James Ingram (2007, 15, 17) argues that FFW's greatest benefits are the "strong welfare component" they include, and "the dynamism unleashed by [specific WFP] projects," which produce and draw on the "enthusiasm and pride of the poor in their accomplishments"; he concludes by noting that within WFP's projects, the "hand-out mentality was entirely absent."

Returning to the central question, what then makes food-for-work particularly amenable to neoliberal geopolitics? I argue that three primary structural features of contemporary FFW are key: first, the decentralized nature of its programming and implementation; second, its heavy reliance on international civil society in delivery; and finally, the emphasis on the labor of the hungry poor to spark development. In general, FFW lightens the burden on governments, as they offload anti-hunger, infrastructural development, and employment policy to civil society and international donors, rather than directly confronting specific segments of hungry, often unruly

populations seeking cash work, political rights, and other entitlements. FFW programs funded by international donors and managed in a decentralized manner by international NGOs allow governments to avoid the messy and costly tasks of food distribution to disparate work sites populated by hungry citizens who may make political claims of state officials and institutions (Papanek 2004). In addition, the FFW model allows for a measure of discipline over the hungry poor not usually found in other food aid programs, and does so through the ostensibly impartial and market-oriented self-targeting mechanism described above.

Generally speaking, then, FFW serves both geoeconomic and geopolitical ends, but cannot long do so without a mapping of the hungry based in two related but contradictory tendencies. The first is the tendency toward global connection, in which the hungry are incorporated into global flows of expertise and food aid, giving them a necessary but subordinate geoeconomic position within the global agro-food system. The other is the tendency toward sociospatially constraining discipline via wage-poor and highly localized labor systems based on imported food aid, the reinforcement of local social hierarchies, and an aid response emphasizing the potential threat posed by the hungry. This threat stems from the risk to systemic order embodied in the political and economic rationality the hungry poor exercise (i.e., supporting movements and groups that can answer their entitlements needs and claims, including radical and extremist ones), *and* their vulnerability to manipulation by forces outside precise calculation and control, including economic, political, and even environmental forces. In a period of both global market integration and globally networked threats and risks, the hungry are the embodiment of neoliberalization's failure to predict and control such networks adequately, in a system of universal rational calculation and flat, open connectivity. The hungry poor demonstrate the inability of neoliberalized market systems to provide basic needs through free markets alone. FFW programs, based on globally networked market rationality and backed by locally-constraining discipline imposed through heavily institutionalized international systems of food aid, development expertise, and geopolitical force, are therefore a perfectly neoliberal response to hunger fraught with potentially destabilizing contradictions. They promise the fulfillment of a universal right while imposing new differentiations of geographically constrained and cash-poor labor markets on the landscape of hunger.

The neoliberal response to hunger does not imply, however, that the hungry poor and implementing NGOs desire or that they easily acquiesce in this contradictory system; nor does it

mean that the tendency toward contradiction between geopolitical and geoeconomic strategies is always and everywhere realized. Indeed, FFW can provide much-needed food resources to hungry people, and under certain conditions can be successful in promoting food security among the very poor and vulnerable. In other instances, though, it reinforces existing social hierarchies, reproducing poverty and relative vulnerability, and disrupts both existing labor markets and relations and local systems of food production and procurement (Lappé et al. 1998; Barrett and Maxwell 2005). Likewise, FFW introduces the possibility of geopolitical differentiation and micromanagement in the relationships between NGOs, donor institutions, and recipient populations. I now turn to three case studies of FFW in action, in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Indonesia, to show the evolution of this anti-hunger strategy in U.S. and WFP practice alongside and as part of the development of neoliberal geopolitics over the last three decades.

Bangladesh

An early example of the contemporary application of food-for-work is the national FFW program in Bangladesh, instituted following the famine of 1974. This famine spurred the development of the entitlement approach to understanding food security, stemming from the failure of both environmental conditions necessary for staple food production in Bangladesh, and the state and markets to provide for the basic needs of the poor and vulnerable. In the famine's wake, the Bangladeshi government established a large-scale FFW program, implemented through partnership with external agencies, to provide food across rural Bangladesh using foreign aid. The FFW program continues today, although its emphasis is no longer primarily on relief but on long-term development, and it is part of the wider Public Food Distribution System (PFDS) within Bangladesh. More broadly, the PFDS operates to provide food to poor households, to distribute food in emergency and disaster situations, and to stabilize agricultural markets and incentivize domestic grain production (Ahmed et al. 2004, 42). While Ahmed et al. (2004) note that Bangladesh reduced the size of PFDS and its FFW component in the early 2000s, to enhance cost-effectiveness and correct for grain losses and leakage (i.e., unauthorized use or sale of food commodities to be distributed), PFDS and the FFW program remain in place as vital parts of the agricultural sector and poverty-reduction strategies in Bangladesh. FFW participants were (and continue to be) paid in rice and wheat, most of which is imported through various food aid channels, and they work on a variety of rural infrastructure projects. In addition,

the program provides seasonal work to participants in rural areas who might otherwise go through several months of slack time during the dry season (January–April) with unstable income; in years of bad or low harvest, the FFW program fills such gaps in income and bolsters household food security (Ahmed et al. 1995).

My goal in highlighting the Bangladesh FFW program is not to examine its current operation, but rather to identify its particular logic as a means of both enhancing food security and promoting rural development in its initial decade and a half of implementation. As one of the largest and most important FFW programs, the Bangladeshi case demonstrates the importance of the FFW model in the early transition from a developmentalist approach to food security that drew heavily on state direction and geopolitically inflected flows of aid, to a neoliberal approach seeking to shed or reduce the scope of bureaucratic and geopolitical imperatives in favor of geoeconomic concerns with market liberalization and agricultural competitiveness. The early experience of the Bangladesh program demonstrates the difficulty faced in pushing neoliberal rollback in the context of mass poverty and food insecurity, the entrenched power of class-relevant elite groups within the Bangladeshi state tied to international aid agencies, and the continued preeminence of geopolitical concerns among donors, most importantly the U.S. The program's development underscores the structural struggles and tensions that arose with the emergence of neoliberal geopolitics as existing models of food aid were incorporated into or made vehicles for neoliberalization. Such tensions were due to the difficulty of uprooting existing forms of elite power, institutionalizing new entitlements for the poor and hungry amid deep impoverishment and relatively weak state and civil society organization, and the novelty of neoliberalism as an emergent discursive formation shaping international food aid. The Bangladesh program constituted an institutional setting through which the tensions between complementary but competing geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses of hunger were worked out. The difficulty of this dialectic helped further develop neoliberal geopolitics, and food-for-work's place in it, in other contexts, despite its incomplete manifestation in Bangladesh.

The key issue for this analysis is the geographic aspect of the FFW program's early operation, particularly the way in which geostrategic logics and practices of local confinement and global connectivity were combined. The WFP and the international NGO CARE, the latter working on behalf of USAID, administered FFW projects, which were implemented in conjunction with three agencies of the Bangladeshi government—the Water Development Board,

the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, and the Local Government and Engineering Bureau (Ahmed et al. 1995, 51). An extensive study of the FFW program's operation, conducted in the early 1980s by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), noted that while the program had been successful in improving short-term food security and agricultural productivity in rural areas of the country, selection, design, and management of specific FFW projects remained problematic, particularly due to a lack of resources for local governments, which were vital in effective project design and implementation (Ahmed et al. 1985a, 95–96). Maintenance of completed projects and continued stability in rural incomes and food security were unlikely with inadequate funding and resources provided by central government, and the report suggested that local resource mobilization with matching funding was the only viable solution, dependent in turn on decentralization of operations (Ahmed et al. 1985a, 97).

A technical assessment of project management also noted widespread issues with land acquisition and underpayment of participating workers (ranging from 2 percent to as much as 24 percent underpayment, depending on the implementing agency and project type), while there were also differences between workers and local elites in perceptions of project utility (Ahmed et al. 1985b, 3–6). A later study of FFW program performance indicated that while local rice millers and dealers, military officials, and government procurement handlers all obtained large rents from their position relative to the FFW and related food subsidy programs in Bangladesh, international actors, especially USAID and the World Bank, also hampered FFW program effectiveness by "pressing the government to reduce expenditures on food subsidies" (Adams 1998, 85).[4] Ahmed et al. (1995, 55) identifies similar problems with the FFW program, especially the undue influence of local elites relative to poorer participants, and "the fact that food-assisted development programs [were] being isolated institutionally from the mainstream development effort." The former is a function of social status reinforcing uneven connection to national and international networks of expertise and food, while the latter represents a structural problem resulting from the government's desire to keep food aid separate from broader national planning, linked to rent-seeking behavior. Such difficulties remain apparent in more recently initiated FFW programs, as discussed below. The key point here is that in the first ten to fifteen years of the Bangladesh FFW program, it became both a vehicle for promoting global connectivity (itself increasingly shaped by the logic of global economic efficiency and reduction

in state expenditures on social programs), and an institutional roadblock to full acceptance of neoliberalization (by entrenching rent-seeking and pre-existing elite networks, and institutionalizing entitlements in the context of deep poverty and widespread hunger). In this process, the emergent neoliberal geopolitics shaping FFW programs today began to take shape, but were limited by the fetters of humanitarian and cold war geopolitics and the inability fully to overcome tensions between localization and globalization.

Ethiopia

Food-for-work programs have been used extensively in East Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, where donating and implementing agencies prefer FFW's self-targeting mechanism amid political instability and the institutional thinness of markets. During the early 1970s, and again in the early to mid-1980s, Ethiopia experienced prolonged drought, meager harvests, and severe widespread hunger. The famine of 1972–1974 resulted in the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie, followed by several years of infighting until a Marxist-Leninist government friendly to the Soviet Union was cobbled together under the leadership of Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1977 (Shepherd 1985, 5). Although this government made gains in literacy and health services and operated an efficient system of rural feeding centers, it also prioritized arms deals with the Soviets, to fuel wars against neighboring Somalia and rebels in the country's north, over rural development and agricultural production improvements. During the mid-1980s famine, U.S. policy used food aid as a geopolitical weapon by denying aid to achieve broader geostrategic goals, with the Reagan administration citing the Mengistu government's Soviet alliance as grounds for withholding aid to Ethiopia. By fiscal year 1984, the USAID request for food aid to Ethiopia was down to nothing, "despite warnings that millions of Ethiopians were starving and that the nation needed 400,000 tons of emergency food aid" (Shepherd 1985, 6). In geostrategic terms, the place of the hungry in this context was dependent primarily on the geopolitical position of the government that ostensibly held sway over them. Within the domestic politics of U.S. food aid policy, the Reagan administration led conservative forces seeking to cut aid generally, viewing it as wasteful at best, and at worst as potential assistance to America's ideological enemies. Such was the case presented against American aid to Ethiopia, as many feared that aid delivered would not be distributed to the hungry, but would pay for Soviet arms shipments instead (Shepherd 1985, 6).[5]

By mid-1985, however, the U.S. was sending hundreds of millions of dollars in food aid to Ethiopia, though this bilateral aid came at the expense of U.S. assistance to multilateral agencies, such as WFP and even the World Bank, working in Ethiopia and elsewhere in Africa, and signaled the development of "a strictly American initiative toward Africa based on free-market and growth-oriented policies" (Shepherd 1985, 8). de Waal (1991) notes that after 1985, the U.S. briefly became Ethiopia's largest aid donor, though virtually all such aid was routed through NGOs rather than through the Ethiopian government due to legal restrictions on providing aid to countries that nationalize U.S.-owned assets. de Waal (1997, 124) argues persuasively that the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s was a product of military dictatorship and brutal counter-insurgency military campaigns, with aid delivered in the context of a "fast deregulating charitable market," undermining both accountability and effectiveness. The Mengistu government routinely channeled food aid to militias fighting secessionists in Tigray and Eritrea, while international relief agencies, donors, and the military dictatorship worked to depoliticize the famine, highlighting environmental and population factors rather than forced resettlement and military offensives, and ignoring the widespread manipulation of aid (de Waal 1991, 1997).

More than an aberration in the operation of international food aid, famine relief and subsequent food and development assistance to Ethiopia indicate a broader geostrategic shift occurring in the final years of the cold war and immediately after. This shift signaled a more robust development of neoliberal geopolitics, enforcing some forms of global connectivity while devaluing and blocking others by finding mutually reinforcing ways of combining geopolitical and geoeconomic objectives. Central to this strategy was the geoeconomic structure of the agricultural economy relative to emergent neoliberal ideals of trade liberalization and property rights, which the U.S. was beginning to emphasize alongside cold war geopolitical concerns and practices. Meanwhile, many other agencies, including WFP and several international NGOs, continued to operate in Ethiopia throughout the mid-1980s famine and to utilize a variety of models to distribute food aid, including food-for-work. WFP set up Africa's largest FFW program in Ethiopia in 1980, using food payments to slow or reverse environmental degradation through reforestation, land terracing, and improvements to agricultural and grazing lands (Humphrey 1998, 6). With the military government's fall in 1991, and the cold war's end, the geopolitical aspect of aid to Ethiopia was recast, and a new Ethiopian government sought to

reorganize food aid distribution amid intense neoliberalization in development policy and practice. In 1993, Ethiopia adopted its National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Strategy, which "states that no able-bodied person should receive gratuitous relief," including a non-specified but widely accepted principle "that 80% of food aid should be distributed through food-for-work" (Humphrey 1998, 3).

A wide literature has now developed on the effectiveness of FFW programs resulting from this strategy, often focusing on project outcomes and success rates in meeting project criteria. Humphrey (1998, 9) argues that such studies have neglected two important questions, especially in examining the large WFP program: First, why have such studies excluded "the wider impacts of the [FFW] project on the lives of beneficiaries" in project assessment? Second, how should future evaluations approach the inclusion of such concerns? The answer to the first question, she argues, lies in the cost and time constraints faced by donating and implementing agencies, such that assessment emphasizes "those [project] features that are more easily quantified" rather than specific impacts on beneficiaries' social lives, which are "generally intangible and inherently subjective when weighed against the costs" (Humphrey 1998, 28). The answer offered, and which the Ethiopian government has incorporated into its selection, design, and monitoring process for FFW projects, has been to increase local participation in all stages of project completion. This practice conforms to Edkins's (2000) assessment of FFW projects in Ethiopia and neighboring Eritrea, highlighting the importance of techniques regarding both quantification and local participation as justifications for FFW expansion.

While stating that FFW programs seem to have reduced vulnerability to periodic food shocks, Quisumbing and Yohannes (2004, 7–10) note that in practice, FFW programs in Ethiopia have nonetheless experienced problems with haphazard application of administrative criteria regarding community and project selection, spreading needed aid too thinly, and the timeliness and mode of payment to participants. They also highlight gender differences in FFW project operation in Ethiopia, and underscore the fact that FFW is a form of "workfare," although they do not critique such programs as emblematic of neoliberal labor market regulation in the fashion of, for example, Peck (2001b) and others reviewing regulatory restructuring in Western contexts. Quisumbing and Yohannes (2004, 43) conclude that "despite directives to target women or to ensure women's control of the food entitlement in FFW operations," the labor market created through this model of food aid delivery "does not appear to be more 'fair' than the wage labor

market in general." They therefore argue for more attention to women's participation and needs in project design and food entitlement use, as well as an increase in food-for-training programs rather than continued over-reliance on projects requiring manual labor.

For this analysis, the geostrategic relevance of FFW in Ethiopia lies in the way it demonstrates the historical shift from early forms of neoliberal geopolitics in the 1980s, which increasingly saw the hungry as equally but contradictorily important to cold war containment strategies and proxy wars *and* in unleashing global market forces via economic liberalization, to a manifestation that emphasized the geoeconomic over the geopolitical following the cold war's end and the widespread adoption of neoliberal prescriptions in food aid and development policy. The strategic combination of containment and connectivity rationalizes the differentiation of the hungry in their position as universal general labor. This rationalization is achieved through FFW's disciplinary logic of labor force attachment and incorporation of the hungry into national and international networks of bureaucratic measurement, food aid, and institutional expertise. This strategy also more fully enrolls civil society institutions working across many scales in the geostrategic logic and structures of neoliberal geopolitics, as states began to offload programming, delivery, and monitoring of food aid and other development assistance functions to NGOs and other private voluntary organizations. With the more recent post-9/11 reassertion of geopolitical concerns with underdevelopment, terrorism, and state failure, the character of FFW within and as part of neoliberal geopolitics has evolved once more, to include national security and anti-terror objectives.

Indonesia

The financial crisis that gutted national economies across Southeast Asia in 1997–98 provoked fears of political turmoil among observers and state officials in that region and Western governments, with the crisis heightening the vulnerability of poor and food insecure populations and creating conditions for the spread of radical Islamism and other insurgent and popular movements. Such fears were especially acute in Indonesia, where riots rocked Jakarta in May and November 1998, and the neoliberal gains made under Suharto seemed in danger as his dictatorship destabilized in the face of economic collapse. As one security strategist bluntly put it, Indonesia faced the "prospect of large numbers of ill-fed urban unemployed being manipulated by different political factions and provoked into large scale conflict" (Kelly 2003,

11). It was in this context that a multi-year, USAID-funded FFW program was established in Jakarta, to provide food, employment, and infrastructural development in urban and periurban slum areas, and to help preserve Indonesia's geopolitical and geoeconomic position in the wider network of neoliberal geopolitics. This FFW program resituated not only hunger and the hungry, but also international civil society, in relation to U.S. imperial power just prior to and immediately after 9/11. The discursive and strategic place of the hungry, and of FFW as a model, are here dominated by two sets of concerns. First are the geoeconomic concerns with neoliberalization in Indonesia and Southeast Asia and the maintenance of what Glassman (2005) identifies as the subimperial relations that sustain the Indonesian state. Second are the geopolitical fears, articulated by state actors in the U.S. and Indonesia, regarding the spread of terrorist networks amid conditions of hunger, poverty, and economic and political crisis.

The hungry in Jakarta were visible within the framework of a solidifying and expanding neoliberal geopolitics to the extent that they posed a threat to neoliberal order and American and Indonesian imperial relations, a threat that became increasingly potent and real as the poor rioted and pressed claims for food entitlements, economic relief, and political change against the Indonesian state. Positioning the hungry as a geopolitical threat has long been a foundational feature of major anti-hunger and food aid programs, but the Jakarta case illustrates as well the geoeconomic threat the hungry poor represent. Their claim to entitlements to meet the needs of social and material reproduction unfulfilled by both volatile liberalized markets and the neoliberal state, the hungry poor embodied the failure of neoliberal geopolitics to adequately predict and manage the risks produced by openness and global connection. Likewise, the response to the demands and needs of the hungry poor in Jakarta's slums was increased global connection through the FFW program, which incorporated them into global networks of development expertise and food aid, while also sociospatially confining the threat posed by establishing or strengthening local labor markets, thereby reducing the need for further labor migration. These labor markets were demarcated along lines set by international donors and NGOs, and made food aid distribution dependent on participation in them. In doing so, the role of international civil society as a mediating force in the relationship between political society and the hungry poor was deepened even more (Essex, 2009).

The FFW program itself, which began as an emergency program in 1999 but later transitioned to a more development-focused rationale, achieved relative success in building and

improving a variety of health and sanitary infrastructural projects in some of Jakarta's poorest districts, and is rather different from the rural projects discussed in the two cases above because of its urban setting (Mercy Corps 2005). Development progress and enhanced food security achieved through this program are due largely to the on-the-ground work of the implementing NGO, Mercy Corps, which sought to sidestep some of the problems faced by other FFW programs, such as co-option by local elites, insufficient input from participants, and inadequate maintenance of completed projects. In this respect, the FFW program succeeded in establishing a potential foundation for both enhanced food security and community cohesion, a difficult objective in slums where many residents are recent migrants with few of the extended networks they relied upon before migrating to Jakarta.

The urban context of this program, however, highlights the geopolitical and geoeconomic purposes it is meant to serve by the donor agency, USAID, which has both development progress and American national security as its driving objectives. The dispersed rural settings of most other FFW programs do not present the kind of concentrated and more readily translocal threat posed by urban populations. USAID (2005b, 14) has touted the Jakarta FFW program as a successful means of subverting terrorist recruitment strategies, providing employment and food that prevent Jakarta's poor and hungry from taking cash payments that terrorist organizations dole out to new members. Preventing the expansion of terrorist support and influence—an ostensibly geopolitical objective—becomes the domain of geoeconomic discourse and strategy, enacted here through a scripting of hunger as both a motivating force for performing labor remunerated in food, and as the basis for a potential violent threat that is to be disciplined through the wage relation, itself subject to global flows and processes but distinctly contained within the local labor market produced by the FFW program. The Jakarta program, through its successful NGO-led mediation of the global-local tensions inherent in hunger's positioning as both geopolitical and geoeconomic threat (and paradoxically, opportunity), suggests the role FFW might play in the further development of neoliberal geopolitics.

Conclusion

In their examination of the geopolitical–geoeconomic dialectic, Cowen and Smith (2009, 44) identify ways in which emergent geoeconomic social forms have begun to eclipse the "geopolitical social" that had been dominant in the territorial nation-state's mode of calculation

and control since the nineteenth century's end, arguing that "private and public accumulation through imperial violence [are] at the core of geoeconomic social forms." New geoeconomic forms are not yet fully solidified, however, as "the shape of the geoeconomic social is probably still a radically open question" due to multiple, competing counter claims and movements made in the wake of geostrategic shift and political-economic crisis (Cowen and Smith 2009, 44). Building from Sparke's (2007, 339) suggestion that "it is the contrast with geopolitics that provides the underlying rationale for introducing the distinct formula of geoeconomics," I have shown how this contrast is marked by diverse, historically contingent forms of articulation between the geopolitical and geoeconomic, anchored in the placement of hunger and the hungry in different geostrategic discourses shaped and exercised by major international food aid actors. The universal moral claims made by the hungry—to a basic entitlement like food, and from a position of victimization both structural and discrete—constitute not only a field for geostrategic calculation and control by states and other social agents seeking the enforced connectivity and sociospatial differentiation of neoliberal geopolitics, but also ground for building counter-movements centered on, as Kearns and Reid-Henry (2009, 569) argue, life capacities and "human vitality as the measure of injustice."

In the development of contemporary geostrategic discourses and the specific institutional practices and forms associated with them, hunger and the hungry have most often been positioned as a systemic threat, to be addressed through disciplinary and humanitarian strategies reliant on some combination of sociospatial containment and global connection. The particular use of food-for-work models of food aid programming and delivery in three separate cases—Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Indonesia—illustrates the development of neoliberal geopolitics through a focus on how geostrategic discourses have addressed the problem of hunger. In this development, FFW has become a strategy meant to resolve scalar tensions emerging from conflicts *between* geopolitics and geoeconomics. FFW does so by disciplining the hungry, incorporating them into global networks of food aid and development expertise, reinforcing local social hierarchies, and emphasizing both the sociospatial differentiation produced by hunger and the position the hungry hold as untapped (unskilled, universal, general) labor. The Bangladesh and Ethiopia cases, for example, demonstrate how neoliberal geopolitics developed from and against the cold war-dominated geopolitics of the 1970s and 1980s, in which food aid was both a weapon deployed by donors, especially the United States, in their quest for geopolitical position,

and a primary tool in the development arsenal of humanitarian organizations like the WFP. Geostrategic understandings of development, poverty, and hunger constituted potent ideological and political battlegrounds. The FFW model's prominent place in Ethiopian aid distribution both before the 1980s famine, exhibited in the WFP's environmental and development programs there, and as part of the neoliberalization of Ethiopian food security and aid policy following the military dictatorship's end, highlights the continuities and discontinuities in the geostrategic place of hunger and the hungry in the post-cold war geopolitical–geoeconomic dialectic.

The final case, the urban FFW program in Jakarta, demonstrates the reinvigorated geopolitical positioning of hunger and the hungry alongside the geoeconomic, and the more robust development of neoliberal geopolitics as a form of enforced global connectivity backed by political and physical force. The hungry embody the systemic threat of hunger in a world of volatile markets and unanswered political and social demands, and the Jakarta program's relative success indicates the potentially central role FFW may hold for further refining the place of hunger, poverty, and underdevelopment within neoliberal geopolitics. This success has also meant the more complete enrollment of international civil society into the project of neoliberal geopolitics, as neoliberalization has entailed a general but uneven shedding of development and aid programming responsibility by the state, and its subsequent integration by civil society organizations. The latter are not necessarily or everywhere willing and able to take on the task of managing hungry populations, particularly as claims to food entitlements often entail political demands that private and voluntary organizations cannot possibly answer.

The relative positions of the hungry, international civil society, and food-for-work are vital to emergent geoeconomic forms because of their ambiguous and sometimes contentious relationships with one another. As food and other social entitlements commanded by the hungry are more closely intertwined with and dependent on global geoeconomic connection and geopolitical containment, the tensions and contradictions between these strategic paths weighs more and more heavily on the most vulnerable and on those asked to program and deliver aid. In fact, some civil society actors (the NGO CARE International most prominently; see CARE USA 2006) have begun to question the prevailing architecture of U.S.-dominated food aid and the decreased flexibility of contract relations shaped by security concerns, even as the rhetoric of decentralization, flexibility, and localization are embraced. The FFW programs examined here demonstrate, for example, that this food aid model can produce positive impacts in answering

immediate food resource needs, but the attendant entitlements and rights must be adequately recognized, negotiated, and institutionalized across and between scales, something that becomes increasingly difficult under the rubric of neoliberal geopolitics. Ever more urgent claims to food and water, to fair wages and adequate housing, and to dignity and decision-making capabilities, lie in stark contrast to the ability of neoliberal geopolitics to fulfill them, and are the basis for building effective alternative geostrategic discourses and social forms that are translocal, anti-imperial, and socially and geographically just.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] Aside from practical considerations of specific policy and institutional changes leading to better entitlement protection and expansion, Sen's foundational work on famine has come in for vigorous conceptual and theoretical critique. Some of this is strong but sympathetic, and focused on the political gaps in Sen's treatment of the broad range of possible entitlements (e.g., Watts 2000). Others (see Nolan 1993, and Sen's 1993 response) have been withering in their arguments that Sen's approach is both ideologically and theoretically faulty, particularly in its treatment of famine within state socialist societies and the emptiness of entitlement as a usable concept.

[2] Senator Richard Lugar's (2009) comments are representative, and were delivered on the U.S. Senate floor in support of the Global Food Security Act of 2009, which seeks to refocus U.S. development and food security strategies around agricultural productivity investment in developing countries. Lugar argued that, "Food insecurity is a global tragedy, but it is also an opportunity for the United States," opening doors for investment in new technologies and trade while improving the global context for U.S. national security. For a commentary on how the act fails to address the roots of hunger and food insecurity, see Shattuck and Holt-Giménez (2009).

[3] Monetization provides a primary revenue stream for many NGOs, but can disrupt local markets. Many groups are increasingly calling instead for cash aid to support food procurement in local markets, supporting small farmers and bypassing the administrative overhead of aid purchased from American producers and shipped on American vessels.

[4] During the 1970s famine itself, however, the U.S. actually cut off food aid to Bangladesh because of the country's jute trade with Cuba, which was prohibited under the conditions of PL 480 aid, demonstrating the uneasy balance between geopolitical and geoeconomic imperatives in aid policies (Sen 1983, 135–136). The FFW program backed by U.S. food aid was viable only after Bangladesh agreed to end trade with Cuba.

[5] Several investigations of the Ethiopian food aid distribution system encountered only minimal corruption and no evidence that aid was being resold to fund arms purchases, though de Waal (1991, 1997) details quite clearly the

inaccuracy of this assessment. U.S. aid to Ethiopia remained tied to geopolitical and military strategy, with emergency aid authorized by Congress for Ethiopia in 1984 including an amendment that sent millions of dollars for military aid to anti-communist forces in El Salvador and Nicaragua (Shepherd 1985, 7).

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