

FORUM-SHOPPING FOR GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY GOVERNANCE? CANADA'S APPROACH AT THE G8 AND UN COMMITTEE FOR WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Matias E. Margulis*
Division of History and Politics
University of Stirling
Email: m.e.margulis@stir.ac.uk

Abstract:

Following the 2007–2008 Global Food Crisis, the Government of Canada doubled its aid spending on food security and made fighting world food insecurity a key foreign policy objective. The Government of Canada positioned itself for, and claims to enjoy, global leadership in global food security governance. This article examines the Government of Canada's behavior at two leading institutions for global food security governance, the Group of Eight (G8) and the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS). I argue that the government has engaged in a forum-shifting strategy between these two institutions that has enhanced its reputation among a small group of peer states at the G8 but diminished its reputation and influence at the CFS. With the CFS emerging as a key institution for agenda-setting, norm-building and rule-making in global food security governance, Canada's marginal influence and peripheral status at this body undermines the government's claims of global leadership

Dans la période qui a suivi la crise alimentaire mondiale de 2007-2008, le gouvernement du Canada a multiplié par deux sa contribution financière à la sécurité alimentaire et fait de la lutte contre l'insécurité alimentaire mondiale un objectif prioritaire de sa politique étrangère. Le gouvernement canadien s'est positionné en tant que leader de la gouvernance mondiale de la sécurité alimentaire et revendique ce rôle. Cet article examine le comportement du gouvernement canadien au sein de deux institutions majeures impliquées dans la gouvernance mondiale de la sécurité alimentaire : le Groupe des huit (G8) et le Comité des Nations-Unies sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (CSA). Je soutiens que le gouvernement canadien s'est engagé dans une stratégie de changement de forum de l'une de ces deux institutions à l'autre et que cette stratégie a consolidé sa réputation dans un petit groupe de pays qui lui sont comparables au sein du G8, mais terni sa renommée et son influence au sein du CSA. Étant donné l'émergence du CSA en tant qu'institution clé pour l'établissement des programmes, la construction des normes et l'élaboration des règles pour la sécurité alimentaire mondiale, l'influence marginale et le statut périphérique du Canada dans cet organisme compromettent l'affirmation du pays selon laquelle il joue un rôle de leader mondial.

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Introduction

“As a continuation of our international leadership on food security and agriculture, we are pleased to support the New Alliance for Food and Nutrition Security.”

- Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada (2012)

“Canada’s leadership in addressing food insecurity.... is recognized world-wide.”

- Beverly Oda, former Minister of International Cooperation (2013)

The Government of Canada (GC) made fighting world food insecurity a key foreign policy objective following the 2007-2008 Global Food Crisis. In 2010 it launched the *Food Security Strategy* (FSS) that doubled aid spending on food and agriculture development and firmly placed food security at the top of foreign aid priorities. Since 2010 the GC has contributed over \$450 million to the United Nations’ International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank’s Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP).¹ The GC has taken up the role as advocate for reforming global food security governance. For example, Canada was highly active within the G8 in spearheading the 2008 L’Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) and New Alliance on Hunger and Nutrition Security (NAHNS) in 2013. The GC’s efforts have earned it plaudits at home and abroad; civil society organizations acknowledge the government’s “demonstration of global leadership” in doubling its investments in agriculture (Canadian Food Grains Bank et. al, 2013) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has praised the government as one its strongest supporters (quoted in AgCanada.com, 3 February 2013). These actions strongly indicate that food security is a foreign policy issue of importance to the government. As the quotes above by the Prime Minister and former Minister of International Cooperation Beverly Oda suggest, food security is also an issue where the government sees itself exerting global leadership.

This article evaluates the GC’s claim to global leadership in an under-examined aspect of Canada’s foreign policy: global food security governance. Since the Global Food Crisis, food security has become an issue of great importance in world politics. In regard to current debates about Canadian foreign policy, in particular those concerning the Harper’s government marked scepticism towards multilateralism (Smith 2009; Black and Donaghy 2010; Heinbecker 2010; Trent 2013;), the case of food security is an important one as it is an issue area where the GC’s approach is articulated and pursued *almost exclusively* in a multilateral fashion. Drawing on documentary analysis, interviews and direct observation of inter-governmental meetings, I argue that the GC’s approach to global food security governance demonstrates a forum-shifting strategy. During the window of opportunity created by the Global Food Crisis to reform global food security governance, the GC supported positioning the G8 as the primary global deliberative body over the more universal UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Yet the CFS, not the G8, has emerged as the more central site for agenda-setting, norm-building and rule-making for global food security governance. I show that the GC’s claim of leadership in global food security governance is a partial one at best; Canada may be regarded favourably by its G8 peers for its financial commitments, however, it has not been influential in the swell of transnational norm-building and rule-making activity at the global level.

Context: Recent Developments in Global Food Security Governance

¹ Author’s calculations based on OECD and World Bank data.

The Global Food Crisis elevated food security to a major issue in world politics (Clapp 2009; Wise and Murphy 2012; Margulis, 2013). During the apex of the crisis wheat prices doubled and rice prices tripled, increasing the number of hungry people worldwide to over one billion (FAO 2009). The crisis' complex set of drivers – a volatile mix of weather events, low levels of international buffer stocks, financial speculation, and the massive conversion of food stocks into biofuels – created a “perfect storm” for world food insecurity (Clapp and Cohen 2009; Conceição and Mendoza 2009). The crisis produced unanticipated developments such as a global scramble for agricultural land and food supplies by states and private actors (McMichael 2013).

During the crisis there emerged a widespread recognition by all relevant actors – states, international organizations, global civil society, and the private sector – that existing institutional arrangements and policies had been insufficient to predict and avert the crisis (Clapp 2009; Clapp and Cohen 2009). Following a series of UN summits and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues, a new global policy consensus emerged around new types of institutional arrangements and policies required to address the crisis and achieve long-term world food security. In the same instance, the crisis produced a major disjuncture in how policymakers and scholars understood the causes of food insecurity that resulted in competing understandings of the governance responses required (see Candel 2014). In a recent article Lang and Barling (2012) argue that two perspectives now dominate current global food security governance debates: 1) an ‘old’ food security analysis that frames the problem as one of under-production with the preferred course of action emphasizing improved coordination among international food bodies, better informational exchanges on food production and stocks, and technology-led agricultural productivity growth; 2) a ‘new’ sustainable food security perspective that focuses on the mismatch of production, consumption and policy and identifies solutions security consisting of a short- and long-term reorientation of food supply and consumption patterns aligned to address environmental, health and social inequalities (Lang and Barling 2012: 316-317).

In regard to global food security governance, the post-crisis landscape is characterized by the proliferation of governance bodies, instruments, and policy frameworks. Notable developments include: the reform of the CFS, the establishment of a UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis that encompasses the UN agencies *and* Bretton Woods institutions; the ascendance of the G8 as a forum for security, and; the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Agenda Council on food security to steer private sector cooperation and investment. The two perspectives of food security identified above play out in the political dynamics of emerging global food security governance (McKeon 2013). This matters because the crisis created a window of opportunity for actors to reset the norms, rules and institutions governing world food security. In the immediate wake of the crisis there was (and there continues to be) global political debates and struggles about which institution(s) should take on the leading governance role for world food security and, in parallel, which vision of food security should ultimately guide global policy-making. For the purpose of the analysis presented here, the most relevant institutions to global food security governance are the CFS and G8; these emerged as leading institutions where states and non-state actors are engaged in agenda-setting, rulemaking and deliberating emergent global food security governance.

The Group of Eight

An unexpected political response to the crisis was the ascendance of the G8 as a major player in food security. Whereas the theme of world food security had appeared in earlier G8 communiqués, the crisis prompted the G8 to make food security a key area of its work (Margulis 2012). From a rather tepid communiqué in 2008 calling for greater cooperation on world food security (G8 2008), the G8 rapidly moved to launch a highly ambitious global food security agenda in 2009, the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI), which committed \$US 22 billion for agricultural investment and food security

programs (G8 2009).² In 2010, the G8 furthered its efforts with a new focus on nutrition and the linkages between food security and health (G8 2010). The G8 sponsored the establishment of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), a new global food price information clearinghouse (G8 2011), and, more recently, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) that brings together the private sector and African Union to address food production in the region (G8 2012).

The G8's approach to food security has emphasized increasing food production, enhancing information flows and harnessing the power of the private sector. This approach is consistent with the G8's market-based approach and corresponds with Lang and Barling's (2012) 'old' food security perspective. However, the G8's approach to food security is more complex and contains internal tensions. In particular, there was strong disagreement among G8 members with respect to the relationship between financialization and food security at the 2011 Deauville Summit when President Sarkozy called for global-level regulation of agricultural futures to address concerns over world food price volatility (see Clapp 2012a). This resulted in US pushback to the French proposal, with the US opposing global mechanisms to regulate financial markets, and required a brokered compromise limited to supporting greater market transparency. But on the whole, the G8 has established an internal policy consensus.

A related yet overlooked development is the deepening of the G8's policymaking infrastructure on food security. A G8 agricultural ministers group was established in 2009 and a network consisting of finance, agriculture, development and foreign affairs ministries now coordinates the G8's work on food security. The G8 has also opened up its food security policymaking process; it now works closely on technical matters with, and regularly invites to its preparatory meetings and annual summits, the World Bank, CGIAR, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (a major partner in the NAFSN), and developing countries (mostly African states).

Much has been written of the G8's waning influence in world affairs as it is superseded by the G20. However, food security appears to be an issue that has given the G8 renewed relevance and, alongside issues such as global health, points to a greater role for the G8 in global social policy. To date, the G20 has not made food security a priority but appears content to rubber stamp the G8 initiatives (Clapp and Murphy 2013). On the flipside, the G20's bandwagoning on G8 initiatives such as the GAFSP lend the G8's initiatives more credibility by helping overcome its legitimacy deficit.

To sum up, the expansion of the G8's food security policymaking architecture and the mustering of significant financial resources have institutionalized the G8's capacity as a major player in global food security governance.

The UN Committee on World Food Security

The 2009 reform of the CFS created an opportunity to revamp this body because of the perception that the CFS was in decline following earlier successes in preparing the 1996 and 2002 UN World Food Summits (Shaw 2007). The reformed CFS that emerged after the Global Food Crisis is a more robust institution that functions as a deliberative body for global food security governance. Its new mission statement specifies it will:

“...focus on the key challenges of eradicating hunger; expanding participation in CFS to ensure that voices of all relevant stakeholders are heard in the policy debate on food and agriculture; adapt its rules and procedures with the aim to become the central United Nations political platform dealing

² It is estimated that at least \$US 6.5 billion was new money (OECD 2012).

with food security and nutrition; strengthening its linkages with regional, national and local levels.” (CFS 2009: 1)

Among the key reforms to the CFS include novel procedural changes that provide global civil society and private sector bodies with formal status to participate in agenda-setting and policy-making. There are no closed meetings and non-state actors can request the floor at any time. These non-state actors are autonomously organized and select their own representatives. However, final voting remains exclusive to FAO member states.³ Substantive changes include an expanded mandate for the CFS to deliberate on a wider range of issues that directly and indirectly relate to world food security, making this body no longer limited to informational exchanges and monitoring (Margulis 2012; McKeon 2013). These reforms have provided CFS significant political buy-in; there is active participation by FAO member states, global civil society, other regional and international organizations, and the private sector (Duncan and Barling 2012; McKeon 2013).⁴

Whereas the G8 is an important forum for the coordination of development assistance, it is at the CFS that substantive deliberations and rule-making for global food security governance is now taking place. With respect to the agenda-setting function, a number of CFS-based policy roundtables play this role by bringing together experts from across government, international organizations, academia and the private sector to facilitate policy debate. These roundtables are unique in that they are addressing politically-sensitive issues that other bodies have been unable to deliberate such as land tenure, price volatility and biofuels. In this way, the roundtables play an incubator role by preparing the groundwork for future decision- and rule-making.

The CFS is exercising norm-building and rule-making functions in post-crisis global food security governance by being delegated authority to function as a transnational negotiation forum. The most well-known example is negotiations that resulted in the 2012 *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (referred to hereafter as the “Voluntary Guidelines”). This marks the first global-level agreement on land governance and a global shift in the values and politics associated with land (Sikor et al. 2013). The Voluntary Guidelines have been widely endorsed outside the CFS including at the United Nations General Assembly, African Union, World Bank, European Union and the G8/G20. Many African and Latin American states have initiated the process of implementing the Voluntary Guidelines into national law.

Canada, the Global Food Crisis and Global Food Security Governance

The GC ramped up its efforts addressing food insecurity following the Global Food Crisis, most notably by increasing aid spending to reach an unprecedented level of \$CAN 1.2 billion under the FSS. The FSS followed directly on earlier commitments made by the GC at the 2009 G8 summit; it was a substantial investment equivalent to a 70% increase on spending on food security compared to the previous period of Canadian aid programming (CIDA 2012; Tomlinson 2012). Table 1 shows the sharp rise in spending on food security between 2005 and 2011. The third column in the table illustrates the relative share of

³ FAO member states must be UN member states. The FAO has 194 Member Nations, two associate members (Faroe Islands and Tokelau), and one member organization, the European Union.

⁴ This includes the participation of nearly 70 high level private sector industry representatives spanning the entire food and agriculture and input sectors (author’s communication with private sector representative to the CFS, June 2014).

food security-related spending as a proportion of Canada’s overall aid spending; this reached a record high of 27.8% in 2010 and is consistent with the high priority placed on food security by the GC.⁵

Table 1: Total CIDA Disbursements for Food Security in Million \$CAN (2005-2011)

Year	Food Security Codes	% of CIDA Program
2005/06	\$420.99	15.9%
2007/08	\$444.61	16.0%
2008/09	\$611.57	19.3%
2009/10	\$918.00	27.8%
2010/11	\$728.32	21.8%

Source: Adopted from Tomlinson (2012)

The FSS was designed as a vehicle for multilateral cooperation as the majority of financial resources were earmarked for multilateral institutions such as: the WFP for food aid/food assistance; the CGIAR for agricultural research; and, IFAD, FAO and World Bank programs supporting small-scale farmers. The multilateral component of the FSS was significant; this was equivalent to 57%, 70.7%, and 62.3% of CIDA’s total food security spending in 2008/2009, 2009/2010, and 2010/2011, respectively (Tomlinson 2012). The precise motives and goals of the GC’s decision to scale-up on food security are debated in the literature. Essex (2012) claims that the FSS builds on prior work within the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to improve aid effectiveness while intensifying partnerships with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and CGIAR (Essex 2012). Côté and Caouette (2012: 168-189) note that the food crisis “brought food security and rural development back to the top of the Canadian aid agenda” but in a manner which confirmed “support for economic liberalism and its emphasis on production, productivity, and market access rather than increased participation and access to land”. The FSS demonstrates elements of the ‘old’ food security perspective approach in the emphasis on production and technological innovation, however, the emerging sustainable food perspective is also evident in the focus on sustainable small-scale food production, gender, and recognition that future food security outcomes are also to be conditioned by changes in the global economy, financial volatility and climate change (CIDA 2009: 2-3).

Canada’s present approach to food security is consistent with past actions. Canada has long been at the forefront of multilateral cooperation on agriculture and food security, for example, with Canada influential in establishing the food aid regime in the 1960s. Canada is a long-standing signatory to the Food Aid Convention (FAC) and food aid donor to the WFP. By the late 1990s Canada was the first donor to make nutrition a key focus of its aid (Brown and Olender 2013). In 2008 the GC fully untied Canada’s international food aid (it had already untied up to 50% in 2007), a policy shift highly welcomed by Canadian civil society and the UN; this shows that prior to the Global Food Crisis the GC was already reforming its food security policies and deepening multilateral cooperation .

Canada’s Post-Global Food Crisis Approach: Leadership or Forum-Shifting?

Global crises display a pattern of prompting political debate and a rethinking of the adequacy of existing policies and institutions and as such generate opportunities for actors to justify the implementation of alternative norms, policies and rules. The Global Food Crisis was such an event as it spurred states and

⁵ Author’s note: CIDA spending on food security declined in 2010/2011 as this reflects the end of the 3-year (2009-2011) funding commitment Canada made as part of AFSI.

non-state actors to remake global food security policy and governance. Indeed, calls for new global food security governance were ubiquitous during the crisis (see Wise and Murphy, 2012). In this context of remaking global food security governance, the analysis of actors' strategies for agenda-setting, norm-building and rule-making activities is paramount. The GC has been an active player in political contests over the remaking global food security governance; as such, its approach and strategies in these political contests permits an analysis of the government's claims to global leadership.

The GC's approach to post-crisis global food security governance is most appropriately explained as a forum-shifting strategy. I distinguish forum-shifting from the GC's own discourse about "global leadership". Forum-shifting refers to a strategy employed by actors to move rule- and policy-making from one international venue to another (Helfer 2004, p. 14). There are many reasons why actors may choose to engage in forum-shifting, including situations when they regard one forum as better enabling them to achieve desired policy outcomes or seek to relieve political pressure at other venues; create competing norms, and/or; promote integration among multiple international regimes (Helfer 2004). Actors' strategies to achieve forum-shifting vary significantly by issue-area and the range of institutions available. Strategies may include the withdrawal of material resources and/or exit from an institution. A more subtle strategy is for actors to engage in legitimation/deligitimation, where actors seek or grant legitimacy to one institution while actively challenging the credibility and/or procedures of another (see Bexell 2014; Zaum 2013).

Forum-shifting is becoming an ever more frequent dimension of foreign policy and global governance in response to the proliferation of international institutions that provides states an ever greater number of venues to select from in order to pursue their goals (Raustalia and Victor 2004; Alter and Meunier 2009). Whereas early literature on forum-shifting focused on rule-making, the concept is equally relevant to studying actors' efforts at norm-building and agenda-setting at the global level (Coleman 2013). Whether oriented towards establishing binding international law or appropriate standards of international behaviour, successful forum-shifting serves as an important power-enhancing strategy for states (and non-state actors), especially those that lack access to and/or prefer not to exercise raw power (Rüland 2012).

I employ forum-shifting as a framework in order to understand the GC's behaviour at the G8 and CFS. The G8 and CFS are strong cases for analysis as these institutions were the most targeted by actors in remaking global food security governance (Clapp and Murphy 2013; McKeon 2013). It is the G8 and CFS where agenda-setting, norm-building and rule-making efforts by states and non-state actors have been most concentrated and intense; these are therefore appropriate case studies to analyze the GC's role in post-crisis global food security governance.

Canada at the G8

The importance of the G8 to Canadian foreign policy interests is well established in the literature (Kirton 2007; Kirton and Guebert 2009; Christie 2010). The Global Food Crisis prompted the entry of the G8 into global governance activity on food security. Canada played an active and influential role in this development.

Food security was not originally on the agenda of the 2008 G8 Summit in Toyako, Japan, however, a combination of the severity of the crisis and an alliance between the UN Secretary General and the Japanese government proved instrumental pushing the issue onto the agenda (Margulis 2012). The Toyako Leaders Statement on Global Food Security, the first ever standalone G8 food security-specific policy statement, called on G8 members to increase international food aid, agriculture-related aid, and research and development to promote international cooperation for world food security (G8 2008). One

of the notable elements was a reference to local/regional purchases of food aid (i.e., untied aid) instead of sourcing from donor countries (G8 2008: para. 2). This is a highly contentious issue in food security policy. Untying food aid is at the core of a long-standing trade conflict between the EU (which claims tied food aid is a disguised export subsidy) and the US (whose food aid programs are directly linked to its agricultural trade policies) (see Clapp 2012b). The GC, which by this time untied its food aid, was in a position to work towards a compromise between the EU and US and contributed to language in the Statement that did not explicitly recommend aid untying but instead adopted aspirational language that ‘encouraged’ local/regional food purchases by stating (G8 2008: 1); such carefully worded text avoided considerable political fallout within the G8 and cleared the path for a way forward on food security.

GC officials generally played a decisive role in the G8 work on food security launched after the 2008 Summit. Within the GC an interdepartmental task force on food security was established that included experts and senior officials from CIDA, DFAIT, Finance, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) in order to provide the Prime Minister’s Office with a range of policy options and positions to take at the G8. GC officials indicated that the interdepartmental task force worked effectively which had not always been the case, with CIDA and DFAIT historically at loggerheads. The timing of the Global Food Crisis was also fortuitous as it aligned CIDA’s ongoing agenda of increasing the centrality of nutrition in food security programming with DFAIT’s effort to scale-up its policymaking capacity on food security. More importantly, positive interdepartmental coordination fostered an internal bureaucratic consensus on food security, which enabled Canadian officials to be on the same page at multilateral forums. This consensus included a preference for a multilateral approach and increasing the priority of food security in foreign aid.

During G8 deliberations the GC benefitted from a head start in developing a position on global food security governance. In the lead up to the 2009 summit, the G8 decided to establish an agricultural ministers’ sub-group and to also include ministers for development cooperation (i.e., a structure that already existed for finance ministers). Here, the GC’s head start proved to be an advantage as Canadian officials at the preparatory meetings were reputed to be a “well-oiled machine” within the G8’s nascent decision-making structure for food security; this was a result of the good working relations established through the interdepartmental task force. Interviews with several EU and US officials noted their favourable impressions of Canadian officials as among the most-well prepared to substantively engage in the summit preparatory meetings.⁶ Indeed, GC officials recognized that the perception of Canada as a serious and constructive player gave it influence at the G8; peer recognition also contributed to Canada’s selection to chair the AFSI monitoring process. As the first AFSI chair, the GC was in an influential position to steer the design of the performance indicators for peer review of G8 members. In turn, accountability reporting has become a standard feature of the G8’s work on food security. At the 2010 Muskoka, 2011 Deauville, and 2012 Camp David summits, the G8 worked to draw media attention to its collective progress on food security in its accountability reports. Interestingly, the reporting format communicates very little detailed information about what the aid is actually achieving; instead its value is discursive/rhetorical for communicating to national and international audiences. With each passing year, the G8’s accountability reporting has become ever more stylized such as the 2012 Camp David Accountability Report that constructed a traffic light-styled scorecard of individual members’ performance; this permits the G8 to construct an easily understood message about its effectiveness in global food security governance. The relevant point here is that the GC exported its framework of aid accountability and approach to the G8.

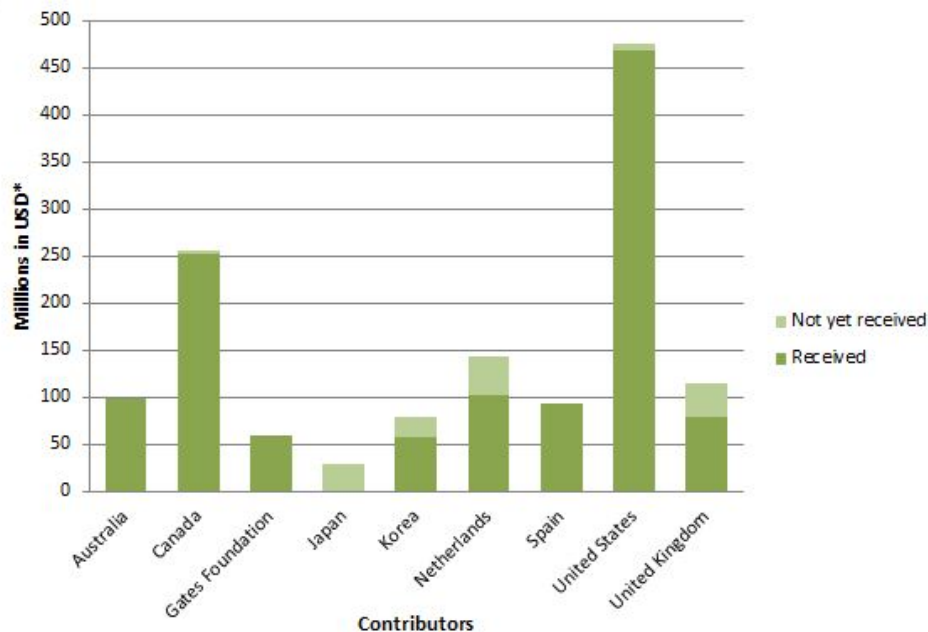
⁶ Interview with EU and US officials, November 2009.

The GC invested significant financial and political capital to position G8-led initiatives at the forefront of global food security governance. At the G8, the GC has been the strongest supporter of the GAFSP, which it identified as a strategic initiative whose successful implementation would provide legitimacy to the G8's food security agenda. The GC was instrumental in leading the technical discussions among G8 members and the World Bank to establish the operational protocols for the GAFSP (World Bank 2009). However, the GC's efforts to shape the GAFSP encountered obstacles such as political disagreement at the G8 over how to structure the GAFSP's administration. The GC expressed a preference for delegating everyday management of the fund to the World Bank, where there would be scope for political oversight. Japan, Italy and France favoured UN involvement to ensure legitimacy and, more practically, coordination with the UN agencies' efforts on the ground. The GC and the US attempted to persuade G8 members to support exclusive delegation to the World Bank, however, in response to strong public criticism by global civil society organizations (and senior UN officials) a compromise solution was reached with the decision to ensure a senior UN official on the GAFSP's governing board.

The GC's initial contribution of \$US 230 million in 2010 was a major signal of its desire to get the GAFSP up and running. However, other G8 members did not follow suit with most contributing a fraction of pledged levels. Indeed, Canada was the largest contributor in the initial phase of the GAFSP (2010-2011) providing around half the G8's total contribution. By comparison, Canada's contribution was nearly four times that of the US, the other champion of the GAFSP (G8 2011: 41). The GC's extraordinary financial backing for the GAFSP illustrates its desire to position the G8 as a leading institution in global food security governance. Yet other G8 members' low levels of support suggests far less enthusiasm for the GAFSP and Canada's inability to persuade them to follow its lead. Interestingly, the G8's commitment to the GAFSP is changing. Fearing the potential collapse of the GAFSP due to a lack of G8 follow-through, the US began exerting significant peer pressure. For example, in advance of the April 2014 joint meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, Secretary of State John Kerry and US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew issued an urgent call to G8 members to increase their contributions to the GAFSP (Lew and Kerry 2014). US peer pressure appears to have been successful in that G8 members started to fulfil their earlier pledges. Since 2013, more than three years after it was created and Canada provided its major financial contribution, is the GAFSP on firmer financial footing (see Figure 1).⁷

⁷ For a G8 flagship initiative, the GAFSP has encountered significant implementation challenges and of the \$US 658 million available for public financing only \$51 million has been dispersed and just \$US 3.3 million distributed from an available pool of \$US 300 million (GAFSP 2013).

Figure 1: Amount Pledged Vs. Amount Received by G8 Members (2010-2013)



Source: GAFSP (2013)

There is debate over how well the GC has targeted and delivered its food security related- aid since the crisis (Tomlinson 2012; Morton 2012). However, most relevant to this article is that the GC has made significant efforts to make itself the top performer among its G8 peers on food security; it remains the only G8 member to meet fully its food security commitments (Aidid et al. 2013). Canada has committed relatively high levels of aid for food security and spends the most per capita on food security-related aid of all G8 members (Canada Food Grains Bank 2013).

Canada at the CFS

The GC was opposed to the idea of a CFS with increased delegated authority. During the initial consultations on the future of the CFS, Canadian officials proposed narrowing the body's scope of work, retaining only the information clearinghouse function, and reducing the frequency and length of meetings.⁸ During the CFS reform process, the GC attempted to influence the normative content of the new mission statement. One item on which the GC created significant discord was its refusal to accept a proposal for the CFS's new mission statement to reference to the human right to food as a founding norm and principle. The US expressed a similar view. However, the GC's position prompted frustration from other delegations and global civil society actors because unlike the US, Canada had long recognized the human right to food.⁹ This positioned the GC as an outlier, being the only FAO member to endorse this human right publicly but reject a reference to it at the CFS. The consensus that emerged was to make the CFS anchored normatively on the human right to food, which contradicted the GC's position.

Similar behavior by the GC can be observed during the negotiations of the Voluntary Guidelines, which is regarded as a high watermark achievement of the committee (De Schutter 2014; Collins 2014). GC

⁸ Author's direct observation from the CFS reform working group meeting (October 14-17, 2008).

⁹ Canada is a signatory to the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR) that established the right to food and endorsed the 2003 UN Voluntary Guidelines on human right to food.

officials were instructed to express lukewarm support for the negotiation process. One illustration of its signalling of disinterest was that the GC did not send experts on land tenure for technical consultations. This absence was curious given that for several years the issue of smallholder access to land was a major focus of Canadian foreign aid (Côté and Caouette 2012). Indeed, the Canadian delegations saw their role as resisting efforts by other delegations and global civil society to produce an expansive, potentially radical, political document.¹⁰ The GC repeatedly took positions that went against the prevailing consensus during the negotiations. An illustrative example was the GC's refusal to support a direct reference in the Voluntary Guidelines to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Canada's shifting position on the UNDRIP is well documented from its initial opposition (Lackenbauer and Cooper 2007) to its public endorsement in the government's 2010 *Speech from the Throne*. The GC's position at the CFS appeared to contradict its 2010 endorsement of UNDRIP. Its position created confusion at the CFS; indigenous groups and human rights organizations were particularly concerned that the GC was using the negotiations to move 'backwards' on the recognition of indigenous rights.¹¹ The GC's efforts to keep UNDRIP out of the Voluntary Guidelines was unsuccessful and the final document made direct reference to UNDRIP as a relevant international standard for protecting the rights of indigenous peoples (FAO 2012; p.15).

The GC's position on the Voluntary Guidelines' relationship to the proposed principles on responsible investment in agriculture (RAI) also generated political conflict. The GC strongly supported the initial G8-sponsored RAI proposal in 2010, including delegating implementation to the World Bank. However, at the CFS, other G8 members (i.e., Italy and France), developing countries and global civil society proposed integrating the RAI negotiation process into the CFS's agenda of work; this would include the (re)negotiation of RAI by all CFS members. The GC took a strong position at the CFS by rejecting this proposal, stating it wished to avoid lengthy and costly consultations required under the CFS's multi-stakeholder and participatory process (see Duncan 2013). Other CFS members viewed the GC's position as counterproductive because they believed a CFS-based process with multi-stakeholder and regional consultations would result in a more legitimate outcome instead of the top-down World Bank-led process.¹² After more than two years of negotiations, states endorsed subsuming the RAI process into the CFS and undertaking a new multi-stakeholder consultation process to develop a new RAI to "promote investments in agriculture that contribute to food security and nutrition and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security" (CFS 2012: 18). The CFS began technical work on developing these principles in 2013 with regional and sectoral consultations taking place in 2013 and 2014 and negotiations to be completed in 2015.

The GC was not only unsuccessful in achieving its preferences as the above examples illustrate but in the process it has developed a reputation of being an uncooperative and negative actor. FAO member states and global civil society participants described GC officials' behavior as often "obstructive" and "negative" when it came to establishing consensus on normative and procedural matters.¹³ Indeed, the GC's approach to CFS meetings and negotiations was wryly referred to by several delegates as akin to a "just say no" approach. The former CFS Chairperson confirmed this characterization noting that Canadian officials were publicly rebuked during meetings for what was regarded as highly uncooperative behaviour.¹⁴ The negotiation chairperson for the Voluntary Guidelines observed that the

¹⁰ Interviews with Canadian delegation to CFS (October 2008; November 2009).

¹¹ Communications with Sofia Monsalve of the Foodfirst Information Action Network (November 2009; October 2012).

¹² Interviews with CFS global civil society mechanism and FAO member states (November 2009).

¹³ Confidential interviews with national delegates and international organization staff (FAO, OECD and World Bank) at the UN World Summit for Food Security (November 16-18, 2009).

¹⁴ Interviews with CFS Chairperson, Maria del Carmen Squeuff (October 2008; November 2009).

GC's approach rendered it an isolated and peripheral player at the CFS.¹⁵ This isolated position was not just the result of "tough" negotiation positions by the GC; for example, the US also took strong positions at the CFS, however, it worked tirelessly behind the scenes to consult with states and non-state actors (including global civil society organizations) to find compromise positions. By all accounts GC officials did not engage in similar fence-mending behind the scenes; this is surprising given Canada's forte as a compromise broker in multilateral negotiations (Cooper 1995; Chapnick 1999). As a result of its behaviour, the GC finds itself outside the inner circle of influence at the CFS that includes the US, EU, Brazil and India.

The GC's behaviour at the CFS is consistent with delegitimation as it sought to constrain the CFS's role in global food security governance. At the onset of the post-crisis reform of the CFS, the GC took many positions intended to weaken the CFS; the GC clearly signalled it did not support expanding the CFS and delegating to it political authority for transnational negotiation and policy-making on food security. The GC's positions during the negotiation of the CFS mandate and Voluntary Guidelines are illustrative of frequent yet failed efforts to constrain and prevent agenda-setting, norm-building and rule-making there.

Conclusions: Canada's Contrasting Approaches at the G8 and CFS

The GC's behaviour at the G8 and CFS presents a Janus-faced approach to global food security governance. The GC took on the role of a leading player at the G8 through the design and support of new flagship initiatives such as AFSI and GAFSP, promoting accountability, and becoming the first G8 member to meet its commitments. Canada is regarded by its G8 peers as a model performer on food security. At the CFS, the GC's behaviour is distinct; it has acted to limit the expansion of the CFS's political authority and repeatedly taken positions against the prevailing consensus. Canada is regarded by many FAO member states, and private sector and global civil society participants at the CFS, as an obstructive and negative actor.

How do we explain divergent behavior by the GC at two key institutions in global food security governance? I reject the idea that this simply reflects a case of policy incoherence and/or miscommunication among federal departments. As discussed earlier, the GC has developed an internal network across the portfolios of foreign affairs, agriculture, development, and finance to coordinate Canada's position on global food security governance. Neither is this a case of the GC being anti-UN; it is important to note that despite its ineffectiveness and peripheral position at the CFS, the GC did not seek disengagement with, or exiting, the CFS as it has elsewhere (e.g., UN Framework Convention for Climate Change, UN Convention on Combating Desertification). In addition, the GC's decision to untie its international food aid and provide the WFP, a UN institution, with greater autonomy over the allocation of Canadian-funded food assistance demonstrates the importance of UN institutions to the government's food security policy goals. Instead, I suggest that the GC's bifurcated approach is best understood as a forum-shifting strategy. The GC's behaviour illustrates the decision to adopt contrasting strategies at the G8 and CFS in order to legitimize the former at the expense of the latter. The GC's approach is consistent with actions to carve out a significant role for the G8 in global food security governance while attempting to curb the CFS's expanding role in global food security governance by actively working to constrain the delegation of political authority to it.

The GC's forum-shifting strategy is consistent with expectations that actors would seek to reshape global food security governance during the window of political opportunity created by the Global Food Crisis.

¹⁵ Communications with Alexander Mueller (June 2013).

That window of opportunity is now closed and with it the GC's forum-shifting game. Post-crisis global food security governance has taken on a new shape in which the G8 has come to play an important agenda-setting role and is the preferred site for donors to announce financial commitments. Yet it is the CFS that has emerged as a key site for norm-building and rule-making activity. Moreover, the CFS is taking on a greater centralizing role having been delegated greater political authority; in addition to subsuming the RAI process, the CFS has been tasked with harmonizing food security policy across states and international organizations in a process known as the Global Strategic Framework on Food Security and Nutrition Global Partnership.¹⁶

Despite its performance at the G8, the prestige that the GC earned among a small group of peer countries has not translated into leadership at the CFS, where it is a marginal player. When the GC's claim to global leadership is assessed based on the criteria of agenda-setting, norm-building and rule-making activity for food security, its record at the CFS points to far lower levels of influence than would have been expected given the substantial investments made in this area of its foreign policy. In addition to the reputational costs associated with the GC's behaviour at the CFS, a larger strategic consideration is that Canada is not active in high-level exchanges there among key states (i.e., US, EU, Brazil and India) on food security and its exclusion from decision-making bodies such as the CFS Bureau. Given that the GC appears firmly committed to its policy of advancing world food security, and with the CFS firmly established, the case for the GC to shift course at the CFS is a strong one. This raises longer-term questions of when and how the GC will seek to mend its strained relations with CFS members. In addition, the GC's poor performance at the CFS also suggests it may lack the correct diplomatic strategies to effectively engage in transnational multi-stakeholder forums such as the CFS. This may require the GC to consider retooling its diplomatic approach in order to best navigate complex and transnational modes of policymaking.

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¹⁶ The CFS's work on the Global Partnership, the principles on responsible agricultural investment and biofuels were not delegated to it by the G8; rather it has been the collective efforts of other states, global civil society organizations and international organizations to shift these issues into the CFS.

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