
FEEDING THE HUNGRY

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Advocacy and Blame in the Global
Fight against Hunger

Michelle Jurkovich

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To my grandmother, Helen Keith

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Preface

I have written this book with a number of different audiences in mind. For human rights scholars, my goal is to make the case for expanding the scope of our inquiry to focus greater attention on economic and social rights and their campaigns. Our literature is severely lopsided. We now know a great deal about civil and political rights advocacy but have left an entire subset of rights—that is, economic and social rights—underexplored. This book looks at one case of an economic and social right, the right to food, and finds that many of the assumptions we make in our literature on human rights advocacy do not apply here—especially assumptions about the nature of blame and the logic of advocacy that flows from these views. I develop an alternative model of advocacy, called the buckshot model, which I argue better explains the trajectories of campaigns in this issue area. The right to food shares many important characteristics with the larger category of economic and social rights, and there may be great theoretical and empirical pay-offs to focusing greater attention on this subset of rights.

For constructivists, this book explores the implications for an issue area (hunger) when there is no norm present. Constructivist work often highlights how norms make some action possible, but does not look at the logical corollary: how a lack of a norm can make action impossible or less possible. In the hunger case, the lack of a norm makes centralized pressure around a single target less likely. Additionally, for constructivist scholars of human rights in particular, this book questions the assumption that all human rights actually have norms and explores the implications of the lack of a norm on advocacy efforts on the ground.

For legal scholars and constructivists, this book seeks to encourage new thinking on the varied role of international law in legitimating advocacy campaigns. We know little about why international law is used to legitimate advocacy campaigns in some issue areas but not in others. Moreover, the hunger case highlights how norms do not translate automatically from law. This study enables us to ask new questions about the relationship between law and norms and questions the primacy of focusing on law for the fulfillment of all human rights.

Finally, for activists, this book seeks to make sense of what international anti-hunger activists already know: advocacy in this issue area is extremely difficult. The book explores the conditions that contribute to making activism challenging here with the hope that greater understanding of these conditions can be useful going forward. During interviews, the staff members of these international

anti-hunger organizations frequently expressed interest in knowing how their fellow activists understood questions of blame and solutions for the hunger problem. My hope is that they find the results as interesting and telling as I did.

This project would not have been possible without the generosity of the anti-hunger activists, archivists, colleagues, friends, and family who gave of their time, wisdom, good humor, and patience to see the book to completion. I am especially grateful to the many activists fighting tirelessly for a world without hunger who shared their stories and insight despite the many other demands on their time.

I am grateful to the American Consortium of European Union Studies; the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences and the Institute for European and Eurasian Studies, both at the George Washington University; the Loughran Foundation; and the University of Massachusetts Boston for their generous financial support in funding essential research trips to London, New York City, Oxford, Rome, and Washington, DC to conduct interviews, surveys, and archival work. Special thanks are due to Patricia Merrikin for helping me navigate the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) library collections and to Fabio Ciccarello for his assistance in accessing the FAO archives.

Research for this project began when I was at George Washington University, and I am especially grateful to Jennifer Clapp, Kimberly Morgan, Susan Sell, and Rachel Stein for their support and guidance throughout the research and writing process. My writing/support group—Kelly Bauer, Kerry Crawford, and Jake Haselswerdt—infused the otherwise lonely task of writing early chapter drafts with baked goods and good spirit.

This book was largely rewritten during my time at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, where I benefited from a superb interdisciplinary community which pushed me to think outside the boundaries of political science. I am deeply grateful, in particular, to Jenny Greenburg for her support and insightful feedback, Gregory “Duff” Morton for our near daily conversations on core theories and concepts, Lucas Stanczyk for introducing me to new insights in philosophy, and Elizabeth Williams for her wisdom and advice on how to think about historical records. My writing group at Brown University—Maria Abascal, Casey Miller, and Perry Sherouse—helped keep me on track with chapter revisions and, as sociologists and anthropologists, provided fresh perspectives from other fields.

Over the years I have benefited from the generous feedback of so many kind souls that I have now lost count. Special thanks to Holger Albrecht, Jessica Anderson, Peter Andreas, Narges Bajoghli, Davy Banks, Rob Blair, Mark Blyth, Keith

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I am deeply appreciative to the International Studies Association–Northeast for selecting this manuscript as the 2016 Northeast Circle Honoree and hosting a roundtable discussion on it. Sammy Barkin, Jamie Frueh, Andrew Ross, and Deborah Wheeler all read the entire manuscript and provided valuable feedback. A second book workshop was hosted by the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs in April 2017 and I am especially grateful to Charli Carpenter, Michael Kennedy, Robert Paarlberg, and Wayne Sandholtz for reading the entire manuscript and providing insightful comments and suggestions as it underwent its next round of revisions. These scholars represent what is best in this profession—the incomparable generosity of spirit (and time!) in helping build new scholarship.

This book was completed at the University of Massachusetts Boston, where I am grateful to my colleagues and students for their support and insight. I am especially grateful to Sammy Barkin, Joseph Brown, Leila Farsakh, Luis Jiménez, Paul Kowert, Jeffrey Pugh, and the graduate students in my Human Security seminar for providing feedback on several chapters. The book was made stronger by the helpful feedback given by participants of workshops and seminars where I presented chapters and core ideas of the manuscript, including at Brown University, the George Washington University, Harvard University, Northwestern University, Occidental College, the Ohio State University, Reed College, the University of Alabama, the University of California Riverside, and the University of Southern California.

I owe an immeasurable debt to Martha Finnemore for her unwavering support and sage advice. I am tremendously grateful for her mentorship and friendship. Lee Ann Fujii was a mentor and friend from my early years as a graduate student and taught me how to think about research ethics, power, and positionality in the discipline. She is greatly missed.

At Cornell University Press, I had the great fortune of working with Roger Hayden. It was Roger who taught me how to start an introduction chapter, and his insightful comments and suggestions during the revision process are much appreciated. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for their thoughtful and constructive feedback. Chapters 3 and 5 contain text first published in my article “What Isn’t a Norm? Redefining the Conceptual Boundaries of ‘Norms’ in the Human Rights Literature,” *International Studies Review* (2019), used by permission of Oxford University Press and the International Studies Association.

Friends and family made the process of researching, writing, and rewriting this book bearable. Jess Epstein, Nicolin Neal, James Orr, Trish Orr, Abby Parker, Christy Qualle, Cordie Micah Qualle, Ozge Tekin, and Lindsay Wallace lent their support, wit, and good humor and on more than one occasion also provided home-cooked food. I am tremendously grateful to Dina Bishara and Giovanni Mantilla for their steadfast friendship and for never failing to pick up the phone when I needed their advice. My family, Michael, Jeanette, Joey, Krissy, and Landon Jurkovich, tolerated long absences from Fresno as I completed the book and provided loving support when I was there. My mother made it her personal mission to ask nearly every time we spoke on the phone if I had finished my book yet. I am realizing now that it will never truly seem finished, but hopefully its appearing in print will be close enough.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Helen Keith, the most selfless person I have ever known.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

THE POLITICS OF CHRONIC HUNGER

“Let me just tell you something a bit more provocative,” said a senior official at Oxfam America as we began our interview. “If [anti-hunger organizations] aren’t willing to use the word ‘blame’ or an appropriate euphemism for it . . . they don’t actually believe there is a right to food.”

So, then, who was to blame for hunger? Grabbing a sheet of paper, she began to draw.

“There’s the person we’re trying to benefit,” she said, drawing a stick figure in the middle of a big circle. “She sits at the center of the universe.” Dividing up the circle around her into three sections (the private sector, the state, and civil society) at three different levels (local, national, and global) she proceeded to rank each segment to identify its relative level of blame for the problem of chronic hunger. In total, nine different actors were to blame. Being able to say there is a “right to food” meant “you are capable of identifying who’s responsible, talking about the nature of their responsibilities and doing something about it,” she explained.

Confused, I looked at her drawing of the nine different actors she ranked as to blame for hunger: “So, who *is* responsible?”

“I’ve just told you,” she replied.

“Lots of people, then?” I asked.

“Yeah, and you hold them *all* responsible.”

Our conversation continued for several minutes before I raised the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, thinking that clearly international law had already determined that national governments were the actors who were obliged to

fulfill the right to food. Interjecting quickly, she exclaimed, “We’re not that legal. I mean, the reason—honestly—the reason we do rights-based work is, I walk into every room . . . I go in to any place anywhere and just say, ‘Listen. I’m not going to tell you anything about the law. Who in here has the right to enough basic food to eat everyday so that they can live with dignity?’ Everybody. ‘What convention is it in?’ ‘I haven’t a clue, but I have the right!’ That’s what you need to know, okay? I don’t care if you know the name of the convention, I need you to know that the people we serve have that right and *somebody is responsible*.”¹

In the course of one hour, this senior official had taken much of what the human rights literature in international relations had come to expect from human rights advocacy and turned it on its head. We have come to expect advocacy organizations to focus blame and shame on one common target actor (almost always a national government) in human rights campaigns.² We expect that these activists rely on human rights law to inform their understanding of whom to target in the event that a human right is not protected or fulfilled. After all, law is what gives legitimacy to human rights claims, according to our scholarship.³ International human rights law, in particular, ascribes responsibility to national governments for the protection and fulfillment of the human rights of those living within their borders. Once governments commit to these laws, we expect activists to use them to compel states to comply.

Over the following months, I would meet with senior and executive staff at top international anti-hunger organizations and time and again would be confronted with a very different lived reality of advocacy work around hunger. This was an issue area where everyone seemed to agree on a common goal (nobody should be hungry), but where there was no consensus among gatekeepers on a unitary actor who was to blame for the problem of chronic hunger, nor any consensus on what precisely should be done to solve the problem. Food is a human right, codified in international and sometimes even domestic laws. However, these laws did not generally motivate activists to focus pressure on national governments to fulfill this human right. For many international anti-hunger organizations I examined, the very concept of a “right” to food was justified not in legal but in moral terms. The result of the lack of consensus on such foundational questions as *who is to blame for hunger* and *how the problem should be solved* resulted in a complex aggregate of international advocacy campaigns often simul-

1. Interview, Oxfam America 1, May 2013, emphasis added. All interviewees are anonymous, though respondents have consented to attributing their quote to a general ranking (e.g., “senior official”) under their specific organization’s name. Executive and senior level staff are grouped under the common ranking of “senior official.” Since identifying the gender of some respondents would make their identities obvious, all respondents are identified with feminine pronouns.

2. Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999, 2013.

3. Alston 1991; Schmid 2015; Sikkink 2011; Simmons 2009.

taneously targeting different actors to blame for hunger and making different demands of those actors in an attempt to mitigate the staggering global hunger rate. Certainly, global hunger was not a new issue that advocacy groups were only now starting to address and thus only now grappling with questions of blame, causality, and proposed solutions. International anti-hunger organizations active today have a long history, dating back to the final years of World War II, though less-organized and more limited advocacy around hunger reaches back much further.

Understanding international anti-hunger advocacy requires challenging assumptions in our literatures on human rights and transnational advocacy. For the most part, these are literatures that have focused almost exclusively on cases of civil and political rights campaigns (such as torture, enforced disappearances, suffrage, and slavery).⁴ We now know a great deal, empirically, about civil and political rights campaigns and have used this knowledge to derive theoretical arguments about how and why advocacy campaigns function the way they do. But there is a gap—an entire subset of rights (i.e., economic and social rights)—that we have left underexplored.

This book addresses that gap. In focusing on international anti-hunger activism, I draw to the fore advocacy surrounding one of the most essential—or, as Henry Shue (1980) would argue, the most *basic*—of all human rights: the human right to food. Without the realization of the right to food, the fulfillment of other human rights is either impossible or substantively meaningless. The right to education, for instance, can hardly be realized when individuals are so hungry that they cannot think. It would be challenging for freedom (of assembly, of speech, of thought) to retain its full promise when experienced on an empty stomach. The liberating promise of human rights rings hollow when parents find themselves in constant worry that their children will have enough to eat, such that they can avoid the pangs of hunger and the weakness and sickness that comes with it.

And yet, hunger is a daily, lived reality for an estimated 821 million people in the world.⁵ According to John Holmes, United Nations under-secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs from 2007 to 2010, “Each day, 25,000 people, including more than 10,000 children, die from hunger and related causes.”⁶ To put this issue in perspective, more people die from hunger and related causes globally than in all wars, civil and international, combined. More people die from hunger

4. Carpenter 2011, 2014; Hawkins 2004; Hyde 2011; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Kelley 2008; Klotz 1999; Lutz and Sikkink 2000; Price 1997, 1998.

5. Food and Agriculture Organization et al. 2018, v. The estimate is for the year 2017.

6. Holmes 2008. Estimates of hunger related deaths vary. According to Black et al. (2013), in 2011 an estimated 3.1 children died from undernutrition globally.

and related causes each year than in all violent deaths (including gang violence, intentional and unintentional homicide) combined.⁷ Hunger remains a problem in all countries, not only in those with the most struggling economies or those emerging from decades of civil war. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated a 14 percent rate of “food insecurity” among Americans in 2014, among the highest rates in all industrialized countries.⁸ Hunger is one of the most pressing global problems today, and yet the discipline of political science has spent surprisingly little time examining the role of international advocacy in this issue area.

This is unacceptable. If we think politics is about “the uneven distribution of power in society, how the struggle over power is conducted, and its impact on the creation and distribution of resources, life chances, and well-being,” there are few problems as inherently political as who gets enough to eat in this world and who does not.⁹ Yet, few political scientists, particularly in the United States, focus much attention on the problem of global hunger. There was a brief surge of interest in hunger and the politics of food in the late 1970s, culminating in a special edition of the journal *International Organization* titled “The Global Political Economy of Food,” but the discipline’s interest in the topic quickly subsided.¹⁰ Over the coming decades, a few political scientists would conduct studies on international food aid and social movements around food,¹¹ apply regime theory to hunger,¹² examine the global food crisis of 2008,¹³ debate the role of genetically modified organisms in modern agriculture,¹⁴ and probe the link between food insecurity and domestic instability,¹⁵ but such studies were comparatively rare. The subfield of international relations, in particular, has remained focused on questions of conflict and trade, with virtually no scholarship on global hunger in any of the field’s flagship journals.

Instead, scholarship on hunger in the social sciences is scattered across a number of disciplines, with no clear disciplinary “home.” Economists have been and continue to be interested in questions of economic demand for food, food sub-

7. According to Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2011, 1), “More than 526,000 people are killed each year as a result of lethal violence.”

8. In 2006, the USDA removed the word *hunger* from its hunger metric, settling instead on the term *food insecurity*. The rationale for the change was that officials argued that hunger, as a sensation, was not something that could be effectively measured and thus the term should not be used. *Food insecurity* served as a more technical (and perhaps politically sterile) word that the USDA defines as “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.” See U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service 2019.

9. Marsh and Stoker 2010, 7.

10. “The Global Political Economy of Food” 1978.

11. Claeys 2015; Clapp 2012; Uvin 1992; Wallerstein 1980.

12. Margulis 2013; Uvin 1994.

13. Clapp and Cohen 2009.

14. Paarlberg 2009; Zerbe 2004. See also sociologist Lang 2016.

15. Hendrix and Brinkman 2013. On the relationship between food insecurity and conflict, see Messer and Cohen 2007.

sities, food price volatility, the effects of economic policies on nutrition, and the economics of food aid.¹⁶ Anthropologists have conducted important studies on food insecurity in specific local contexts.¹⁷ Sociology, like political science, has seen little scholarship on global hunger, despite the efforts of Stephen J. Scanlan to bring the study of food security into the field.¹⁸ Hunger has, in many ways, become an “orphaned” issue: everyone agrees that it is important, but nobody knows who ought to be studying it.

Within the natural, agricultural, and earth sciences, prior scholarship has conceptualized hunger as primarily a technical problem with technical solutions: if only we could devise ways to grow more food with fewer inputs and in more environmentally friendly ways, these studies suggest, we could solve the hunger problem.¹⁹ Yet the social sciences are especially equipped to challenge answers to complex social and economic problems that rely exclusively on technical solutions, as few benefits in society are ever distributed equally or fairly, even when scientific advancement allows resources to exist in abundance. The world currently produces more food than it needs to feed even its ever-growing population of over seven billion, and should new crop varieties and farming methods enable it to produce an even greater surplus, there would still be no guarantee that this abundance would reach the most marginalized in societies. As of 2014, the United States had roughly a 14 percent food insecurity rate, despite having the most efficient agricultural industry in the world and producing far more food than its population needs. Having been raised in the farming community of Fresno County, California, I was struck by the stark contrast of staggering rates of poverty and hunger amid the abundant groves of oranges, orchards of almonds, and the seemingly limitless supply of grape vineyards; this was a daily reminder that the existence of a resource by no means guarantees an individual any access to that resource. One might assume that simply increasing the supply of a specific commodity would automatically decrease the price to consumers (thus enabling greater access), but history reminds us that there has always been, and likely always will be, a gap between the lowest price that producers are willing to sell a commodity at to turn an acceptable profit and the highest price the poorest in society can afford to pay for the given commodity. The market alone has never been able to solve the hunger problem.

16. Barrett 2001; Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Drèze, Sen, and Hussain 1995; Pinstrup-Andersen 1987, 1988, 2010; Sen 1981.

17. De Waal 2004; Scheper-Hughes 1993; Taussig 1978. For a broader survey, see Pottier 1999.

18. Scanlan 2003, 2009. There has been, however, growing interest in food safety regimes (see, Epstein 2014) and in questions of global food systems (see Winders 2009; and Wright and Middelndorf 2007).

19. Baldos and Hertel 2014; Bommarco, Kleijn, and Potts 2013; Burke and Lobell 2017; Godfray et al. 2010; Popp, Pető, and Nagy 2013. On growing more food in an era of climate change, see Lipper et al. 2014.

Looking specifically at famines, Nobel Prize–winning economist Amartya Sen argues that scholars must look beyond questions of food supply in order to understand the conditions under which famines might be expected to arise and persist. As Sen notes, “Starvation is the characteristic of some people not *having* enough to eat. It is not the characteristic of there *being* not enough food to eat”; instead, it is an individual’s *entitlement* to food that explains who gets enough food to eat and who does not (1981, 1, emphasis in the original). According to Sen, the “entitlement approach . . . concentrates on the ability of people to command food through the legal means available in the society” (1981, 45). Entitlements, however, are complicated, socially negotiated arrangements that can and have changed over time depending on the particular social and economic issue at hand. Central to understanding entitlements is not only determining *who* is entitled to *what*, but who is obliged to provide that specific good in the event the individual is unable to command it through one of the more conventional mechanisms of entitlement (namely, trade or individual ownership). Looking back to the conversation with the Oxfam America official at the beginning of this chapter, there was little doubt she believed all humans were entitled to enough food to eat, though this belief was not rooted in any legal framework. But as this book will show, agreement on a desired goal or objective (that all people ought to have enough to eat) does not mean it is clear *how* that goal should be attained, or perhaps most importantly for the purposes of understanding social pressure, *who* should be obliged to ensure the goal is met.

The present study takes the challenge of constructing this *who* should do *what* seriously, bringing insights from across different fields to bear on the case of international advocacy to combat chronic hunger. It embraces Sen’s (1981) argument that one must look to entitlements and not food supply to understand the persistence of hunger but challenges the idea that these entitlements should be (or are) viewed primarily in legal terms. This book highlights the socially constructed nature of an entitlement to food and the varied interpretations of what constitutes a human right to food, identifying challenges that hinder the construction of a norm that *good governments ought to ensure that their people have enough food to eat*. Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze (1989) have documented the ability of public pressure in open political environments to eliminate famines, but it has not had the same effect in eliminating chronic hunger. In highlighting the struggle to articulate an anti-hunger norm, this book helps to explain why.

Finally, in contrast to much of the hunger literature, this study focuses not on famines or short-term hunger but rather on international advocacy around chronic hunger. While a study of campaigns seeking emergency famine relief would be a valuable contribution in and of itself, the majority of the world’s hungry suffer not from short-term famine but from long-term food deprivation.

This hunger often does not have the benefit of flashy media attention, where pictures of children with bloated bellies could perhaps sustain a brief period of sympathy for a food crisis. Ventures in response to chronic hunger require far more effort on the part of activists to construct meaningful campaigns, and how and why activists construct these campaigns matters a great deal. Put differently, it would be easy to forget about chronic global hunger. A problem of this sort cannot on its own easily sustain media or public attention. Without the advocates examined in this study, it is unlikely that this problem would receive much attention or support at all.

Rethinking Core Concepts

As this book will demonstrate, an analysis of international anti-hunger advocacy requires rethinking core theories and concepts used by human rights scholars. Our way of thinking about what constitutes a human right and a norm, as well as the relationship between rights, norms, and law, are all challenged by the important work international anti-hunger activists are currently doing in the world.

Much scholarship focuses on the primacy of law in constituting and legitimating human rights, yet advocacy around hunger and the right to food problematizes such a link. As this study will highlight, while persistent hunger can indeed be conceptualized as a rights violation, some international anti-hunger organizations choose to avoid rights language entirely, framing hunger instead as a development problem. Those who do frame the hunger problem as a violation of the human right to food, such as the Oxfam America official quoted at the beginning of this chapter, may justify this right in moral and not legal terms. This is a case in which international human rights law exists but is rarely used, even by top international anti-hunger organizations. Ronald Dworkin (1978) considers “rights as trumps,” but the hunger case begs caution. As subsequent chapters in this book will discuss, the near hegemonic focus on civil and political rights in the human rights literature has limited our understanding of alternatives to legal justification of rights and encouraged models of human rights activism that assume that in cases of human rights violations activists must inherently agree on one target actor on whom to focus social pressure, the national government, because this is the actor to whom international law ascribes responsibility. Instead international anti-hunger organizations exhibit a complex understanding of blame and responsibility surrounding the persistence of hunger and focus their efforts on a wide array of targets spanning from transnational corporations to price speculators, financial institutions, and outside states, or sometimes choosing in their advocacy efforts to avoid attempts at targeting any actor at all as to blame for hunger.

The hunger case thus invites us to reconsider what constitutes and legitimates the *human right to food*. How do activists determine whom to blame in the case of violations of economic and social rights such as the right to food? If law is not the primary means of legitimating this human right, how do moral justifications serve to mobilize support for international anti-hunger campaigns? Answering these questions will require unpacking how social scientists understand the role of norms (defined as collectively shared “standards of appropriate behavior for actors of a given identity”),²⁰ and the relationship between norms and law. Norms are what enable focused shaming and blaming on a common actor when that actor deviates from the socially appropriate behavior expected from it. But in order to have a clear “norm violator,” there must be a norm to be violated in the first place. The hunger case encourages scholars to consider more carefully the difference between shared moral principles (e.g., “people ought not be hungry”) and norms (e.g., “good governments ought to ensure that their people have enough to eat if they cannot afford to feed themselves”). This book offers readers an expanded conceptual tool kit with which to understand the social and moral forces at play in human rights advocacy, moving beyond the overreliance of the norm concept to understand how norms differ from moral principles, super-erogatory standards, and law in the case of international anti-hunger advocacy.

The Landscape of International Anti-Hunger Advocacy

The present study relies on interviews and surveys conducted with senior officials at top international anti-hunger organizations.²¹ In total, more than seventy staff members of international anti-hunger organizations were interviewed for this project, most of whom were based at the following organizations: Action against Hunger; ActionAid; Amnesty International; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Bread for the World; CARE; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN); FIAN International; Médecins sans Frontières / Doctors without Borders (MSF); Oxfam; the Rockefeller Foundation; Save the Children; the UN’s World Food Programme, and World Vision. Many of these organizations contain multiple affiliate offices based in different countries. For additional information on the non-UN organizations consulted for this study, including the specific affiliate offices (where applicable) of these organizations where I conducted interviews, see

20. This definition of a *norm* comes from Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891.

21. For additional information on research methods, and especially on the interview method, see the appendix.

TABLE 0.1 Anti-Hunger INGOs and Foundations Included in This Study

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	AFFILIATE/SECTION/CONFEDERATE OFFICE INTERVIEWED OR SURVEYED	YEAR ORGANIZATION BEGAN ANTI-HUNGER WORK
Action against Hunger/ Action Contre La Faim	Action against Hunger USA	1979 (as Action Contre la Faim)
ActionAid	ActionAid UK, ActionAid USA	1972 (as Action in Distress)
Amnesty International	Amnesty International Secretariat Office	2001 (though the organization was founded in 1961, it began economic, social, and cultural rights work in 2001)
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Not a confederation	2005 (though the organization was founded in 2000)
Bread for the World	Not a confederation	1974
CARE	CARE USA	1945
Doctors without Borders / Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)	Doctors without Borders USA	1971 (as Médecins sans Frontières)
FIAN International	FIAN International Secretariat Office	1986 (as FoodFirst Information and Action Network)
Oxfam	Oxfam America, Oxfam International, Oxfam Great Britain	1942 (as Oxford Committee for Famine Relief)
Rockefeller Foundation	Not a confederation	1934 (though the Foundation was established in 1913, it began agricultural funding in 1934)
Save the Children	Save the Children UK, Save the Children US	1919 (as Save the Children Fund)
World Vision	World Vision International, World Vision US	1950

table 0.1. These organizations were selected based on prior secondary research as well as through discussions with activists themselves about important organizations working in this issue area.²² There is no perfect metric by which to determine the definitive list of “most important” organizations working in any issue area, but here I have selected organizations that are powerful by the sheer size of their budget, scope, and scale of their operations (e.g., Oxfam) as well as those which, while far more limited in their financial resources, are nonetheless extremely influential in this issue area by nature of their very visible and vocal advocacy campaigns (e.g., FIAN International). Multiple years of fieldwork in Washington, DC, where most anti-hunger international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) have at least

22. This list of top international anti-hunger organizations is, of course, not exhaustive. There is certainly important work being done by influential international anti-hunger organizations that I was unable, due to time and resource constraints, to include here. Additionally, these organizations work on diverse issues, not only hunger. Only a small part of Amnesty International’s work, for instance, focuses on food. They remain in the study because of their influence in the human rights community.

some presence, as well as over a month spent at the FAO allowed me to observe which organizations were not only active in this issue area but also were influential in terms of spearheading initiatives within UN organizations and garnering both financial and popular support for large international multiyear campaigns.²³ In light of their significant influence on international anti-hunger organizations (due to their substantial funding resources), I also have included two foundations (the Gates and Rockefeller Foundations) in this study. Finally, a note about timing—the study that follows focuses on the work of these organizations generally up through 2014, with most interviews completed by 2015. More recent changes to advocacy work within these organizations, therefore, may not be reflected here.

Broadly, we can think of most international anti-hunger organizations as fitting into one of three ideal types: humanitarian, development, and human rights organizations. Most organizations blend the work of two or more of these types—for instance, humanitarian organizations which also engage in development work or development organizations which have developed human rights-based approaches to their work. Some organizations run operations, others focus exclusively on advocacy. Each of these types of work is represented by the international anti-hunger organizations examined in this study.²⁴

These are organizations that work globally, and several wage a common campaign or utilize a common advocacy approach in multiple countries and regions of the world at the same time. For this reason, the present project does not ask about hunger specifically in one country or region but asks senior and executive staff at these organizations about how they understand chronic hunger generally, as this understanding informs the construction of these large multiyear and multiregion campaigns. Furthermore, while it is more common among qualitative projects in the transnational advocacy literature to examine a singular campaign or partnership in a given issue area, I have opted instead to widen the lens of this project to encompass multiple international anti-hunger campaigns across dif-

23. The decision to classify an organization as an international nongovernmental organization (INGO) or a nongovernmental organizations (NGO) is challenging, as the dividing line is imprecise. In this book, I refer to these organizations as INGOs because they work, either through their advocacy or operations on hunger amelioration, across borders. This does not mean all of these organizations have physical offices in multiple countries. Bread for the World, for example, is physically based only in the United States, though as their name suggests they advocate policies for reducing hunger abroad, often focusing on lobbying the U.S. government to improve policies and funding for anti-hunger efforts internationally.

24. As discussed earlier, this project focuses on chronic hunger, and because of this, I did consider omitting MSF, a highly influential international anti-hunger organization, as their work focuses more on emergency responses to acute malnutrition (and its treatment, for instance, through ready-to-use therapeutic food [RUTF]) than chronic hunger. In the case of MSF, however, I opted to keep it in the study, because it was repeatedly referenced as influential by other international anti-hunger organizations and because of its significant advocacy efforts directed toward U.S. food aid. When organizations focusing both on chronic hunger and short-term hunger (such as emergency famine relief) were interviewed and surveyed, they were asked to direct their responses to how the organization considered chronic hunger.

ferent types of organizations (including development and more purely human rights-based organizations) taking place simultaneously. Advocacy around access to food, like that surrounding access to education, health, or other economic and social rights, involves diverse organizations within its network. Broadening my focus to include this complexity allows for not only a more accurate empirical snapshot of advocacy in the hunger realm but also a more comprehensive analysis of advocacy in this issue area.

Moreover, as will be discussed in the chapters that follow, the nature of advocacy in the hunger issue area often differs from the more “aggressive” (to use the word of one senior official at Oxfam America) street protesting and rallies envisioned in much of the human rights literature.²⁵ Indeed, some of the participants in this study might not identify with the word *activist* and some might even hesitate to classify the work of their international anti-hunger organization as *advocacy* given its association with a specific type of more confrontational protest work. I use the terms *activist* and *advocacy* in this book because the work of all of these organizations is about enacting serious change in the way hunger is engaged with and responded to globally, even when some international anti-hunger organizations eschew approaches to activism and advocacy that reflect more conventional naming and shaming strategies. International anti-hunger advocacy takes varied forms, as will be discussed in chapters 2 and 4.

An Overview of the Chapters

This book has an unconventional structure. With the exception of chapter 1, which provides historical detail necessary to understand contemporary advocacy in this issue area, each subsequent chapter opens with its own distinct research question, geared toward better understanding contemporary international anti-hunger advocacy. In this way the book takes more of a “stepping stone” approach to discovery—in answering the question at hand, each chapter opens up a new question that readers might not have considered absent the preceding discussion. The following chapter then takes up that new question, a routine that continues throughout the book.

The book begins by placing contemporary international anti-hunger advocacy in its historical context. Building on archival research I conducted at the FAO archives, the UK National Archives, and the U.S. National Archives, chapter 1 examines how hunger evolved from a *condition*, understood as an inevitable part of the natural landscape, to a *problem*, such that state and nonstate actors would begin to see it as something to be ameliorated. Chapter 1 sets the stage for the emergence of

25. Interview, Oxfam America 1, May 2013.

the contemporary international anti-hunger organizations examined in this book and explores the origins of a human right to food in international law.

Chapter 2 turns its focus on contemporary international anti-hunger advocacy, describing the nature of contemporary campaigns across top international anti-hunger organizations and asking if dominant human rights models—namely, Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's (1998) "boomerang model" and Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink's (1999, 2013) "spiral model"—are able to account for the behavior present in this issue area. Arguing that they cannot, the chapter provides an alternative model of advocacy, the "buckshot model," to describe and explain advocacy around hunger and the right to food.

Building on the insight from chapter 2 that international anti-hunger advocacy does not fit the expectations of dominant models in the literature, chapter 3 asks how it is possible that the behavior of international anti-hunger advocacy varies from the expectations of the human rights and advocacy literatures. This chapter turns its attention to critically evaluating the normative environment in which international anti-hunger advocates work. I argue that there is no norm around hunger or the right to food among top international anti-hunger organizations, and I use this insight to theorize advocacy in issue areas that lack a norm. Chapter 3 provides additional conceptual tools for scholars to make sense of the social and moral environments in which activists are working, articulating the distinction between norms, moral principles, and supererogatory standards.

If there is no anti-hunger norm within this community, this insight invites another question: Why is there no anti-hunger norm? Chapter 4 takes up this question, reconsidering how scholars understand what constitutes a human right and how issues that sit at the nexus of development and human rights (like hunger) struggle to develop socially shared expectations of appropriate behavior by specific actors (i.e., norms).

Finally, chapter 5 considers the puzzling role of international law around the right to food. Why has existing law been unable to generate norms within this advocacy community? This chapter examines the reasons why international anti-hunger organizations rarely legitimate the right to food in legal terms and how this case can challenge scholars' understanding of the relationships between norms, human rights, and law.

My objective in the present study is not simply to replace one advocacy framework with another; it is to force deeper thinking about how the constituent elements of these frameworks fit together. By breaking down standard advocacy models into their components parts and underlying assumptions and showing how the politics of blame, the assumption of established norms, and the role of law do not function as expected in the case of hunger, I can better help explain how alternative types of advocacy arise.