

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PHILIPPINE FERTILIZER,
IRRIGATION, EXTENSION, LOANS, DRYERS, AND SEEDS
(F.I.E.L.D.S.) PROGRAM**

BRUCE PORTUGAL AMOROTO

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THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
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was submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol University
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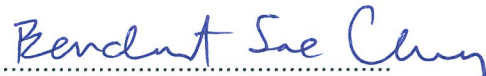
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Bruce Portugal Amoroto

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to understand how the Philippine government viewed the problem and the corresponding solution to hunger and the fulfillment of the right to food in the country. The study aimed to (1) identify and analyze the Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers and Seeds (F.I.E.L.D.S.) Program's general framework on poverty and hunger, and the extent of neoliberalism's influence on such framework and (2) to examine the Program's compliance with international human rights norms and standards, and the extent of neoliberalism's influence on its compliance. This was a Documentary Research that used all primary and secondary texts relevant and related to the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program from 2008 up to the present, particularly the Philippine Rice Masterplan of 2009-2013. Data were gathered and analyzed in relation to (1) the theoretical perspectives on poverty and hunger and (2) the normative content, standards and principles on human rights, particularly the right to food. This study showed that the Philippine government, despite its invocation of human rights language in the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program and related documents, was still stuck in the productionist framework that considers hunger mainly as a function of the availability and supply of food. This was consistent with a neoliberal thinking which sees the primacy of the market as the solution to hunger and to the realization of the right to food of Filipino farmers.

KEY WORDS: RIGHT TO FOOD / FREEDOM FROM HUNGER / FOOD SECURITY / NEOLIBERALISM / PHILIPPINES

128 pages

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Automatic Appropriations Law
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFMA	Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (of 1997)
AHMP	Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program
AO	Administrative Order
AOA	Agreement on Agriculture
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPRE	Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (Central Bank of the Philippines)
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
CASA	Citizens' Assessment of Structural Adjustment
CESCR	UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
CETIM	Europe-Third World Centre
CHARM	Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management
CIDSS	Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services
CMARPRP	Community Managed Agrarian Reform and Poverty Reduction Program
DA	Department of Agriculture
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
EDSA	Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue
EO	Executive Order
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCDU	Foreign-currency deposit unit
FDC	Freedom from Debt Coalition
FIAN	Food First Information and Action Network

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (cont.)

FIELDS	Fertilizer, Irrigation, Education, Loans, Dryers and Seeds
FIES	Family and Income Expenditure Survey
FNRI	Food and Nutrition Research Institute
GATT-UR	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade-Uruguay Round
GHI	Global Hunger Index
GSDP	Grain Sector Development Program
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
KALAHI	Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (“Linking Arms in the Fight against Poverty”)
LAD	Land Acquisition and Distribution
MAV	Minimum Access Volume
MLAR	Market-led Agrarian Reform
MTPDP	Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan
NAPC	National Anti-Poverty Commission
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NFA	National Food Authority
NGO	Non-government organization
NNC	National Nutrition Council
NSCB	National Statistics Coordination Board
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (cont.)

PANTHER	Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Transparency, Human Dignity, Empowerment, and Rule of Law
PCIJ	Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism
PDAF	Priority Development Assistance Fund
PhilRice	Philippine Rice Research Institute
PHP	Philippine Peso (currency)
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
RA	Republic Act
R&D	Research and Development
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
SAPRIN	Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network
SWS	Social Weather Stations
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USD	United States Dollar (currency)
VLT	Voluntary Land Transfer
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the 2013 Global Hunger Index (GHI), the Philippines was ranked 28th and was grouped with 36 other countries under the “serious level of hunger” category (von Grebmer et al., 2013). A quarterly national survey conducted by a non-profit organization estimated there were 3.8 million Filipino families that had experienced hunger at least once way back in 2014 (SWS, 2015a). Based on the yearly average results, the survey also showed that there was a 7.3% increase in the total degree of household hunger perception between the years 1998 and 2014 (SWS, 2015b). On the other hand, a United Nations assessment of the right to food in the Philippines, published in 2010, noted of the “slow” progress of the country in reducing hunger relative to its Asian neighbors (Abad Santos et al., 2010). The same estimated there were between 2.2 million and 12 million¹ Filipinos who experienced hunger prior to 2010.

Related to the above, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) pointed to the country’s “historical poverty” (ADB, 2009, p. 13) and its reduction of poverty at a “slow rate of only 0.7% per year” (ADB, 2009, p. 13) between the years 1985 and 2000. The ADB also noted that despite the country’s 5.3% GDP growth rate between 2000 and 2006, the number of poor Filipino families grew from 4.02 million in 2003 to 4.68 million in 2006. The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) noted that “the concentration of the poor has been in the entire agriculture sector” (Albert et al., 2013) due to the significant decline in the dependency of the Philippine economy and employment on farming. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) supported this claiming that “fishermen, farmers, and children consistently posted the highest poverty

¹ Using data from the 2006 Family and Income Expenditure Survey (FIES), the 2010 Philippine Right to Food Assessment calculated there were 2.2 million *families* who may have experienced hunger based on income and consumption. This number increases to 12 million depending on the number of family members and whether hunger was equally experienced among all of them. See Abad Santos, et al, 2010.

incidences among the nine basic sectors in the Philippines in 2012 at 39.2%, 38.3% and 35.2%, respectively” (PSA, 2014a). Albert et al (2013) also pointed out that while a third of the country’s labour force came from the agricultural sector, the same sector “receives the lowest average daily basic wage and salary compared to non-agricultural sectors” (2013). This supported the findings of the UN study where it found hunger incidence as being highest among farmers (Abad Santos et al., 2010).

Aside from the high incidence of hunger among farmers, the UN Assessment also revealed that the country’s legal framework governing the right to food “falls short of the imperatives for realizing the right to food” (De los Reyes and Diokno 2010 p. 40). Evaluating the 1987 Constitution, 47 laws and related jurisprudence, as well as the law-making process, the legal framework “does not sufficiently incorporate human rights obligations arising from the right to food” nor does it heed the Right to Food Guidelines (De los Reyes and Diokno 2010 p. 40). Overall, while the *Philippines Right to Food Assessment* gave a good picture of the prevailing hunger problem in the country, the study was primarily aimed at assisting the government in its mitigation approach and efforts on hunger thus it did not provide a deeper analysis as to how the fundamental right to freedom from hunger or the right to adequate food is violated in the country.

1.2 Research Problem

While the problem of hunger is indeed complex, a critical investigation and analysis of Philippine state/government programmes related to food and agriculture may provide some clue as to how state structures, systems, forces, and relations have positively or negatively influenced the realization of the Filipino farmers’ fundamental right to freedom from hunger and right to adequate food. Neoliberalism – an ideology and a force that has “structured” and “systematized” Philippine governance from the 1970s to the present – is worthy of examination as well, especially in relation to strategies addressing poverty, hunger and the right to food. An investigation and analysis of a particular food-agricultural program, and the influence of neoliberalism on it, is needed to uncover the root causes of hunger and the violation of the right to adequate food and of the right to freedom from hunger. This

research aims to accomplish this by looking deep into the context and framework of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration's *Fertilizers, Irrigation and Infrastructure, Extension, Education and Training, Loans, Dryers and other postharvest facilities, and Seeds* Program (hereinafter F.I.E.L.D.S. Program or F.I.E.L.D.S.), and investigating whether and how it sought to promote and protect the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and the right to adequate food of farmers in the country as part of the state's legal commitment and obligation under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter referred to as ICESCR).

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

There are three main objectives in this study. The first objective is to identify and analyze the general framework of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program and to examine how it frames the problem of and solution to hunger in the Philippines. The second objective is to examine the Program from the perspective of the international norms and standards on the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and right to adequate food. The third objective is to investigate the influence and the implications of neoliberal ideology on F.I.E.L.D.S. and its approach to hunger and the right to food.

Given the above objectives, the study asks three questions. First, how does the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program approach the problem and solution to hunger in the Philippines in general? The second question is how does the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program comply with international human rights norms and standards, and support the Filipino farmers' individual and collective fundamental right to freedom from hunger and right to adequate food? Lastly, how has neoliberalism as an ideology influenced the framework of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program with regards to the issue of hunger and the right food?

1.4 Research Methods

Documentary Research was the main methodology employed. All text relevant and related to F.I.E.L.D.S. from 2008 up to the present were gathered and analyzed, however, the primary data is the Philippine Rice Masterplan 2009-2013.

Secondary data from websites and other sources were also used for information that are missing or unclear in the masterplan. It should be noted that the Program had already ended by the time the research investigation commenced. However, the Rice Self-sufficiency Masterplan was still being implemented then. The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program was chosen as it is seen as representative of all other state programmes on agriculture-food post-Marcos Dictatorship, but at the same time, the Program is comparable in scope and purpose as to that of the Masagana 99 Rice Production Program under the Marcos administration.

Using the international norms and mechanism on the right to food, F.I.E.L.D.S. will be analyzed to reveal the nature and character of the program and determine a) how it saw the problem and the solutions to hunger, b) how it sought to promote and protect the Filipino farmer's fundamental right to freedom from hunger and right to adequate food. These shall be done by looking at every detail and aspect of the F.I.E.L.D.S. program and scrutinize it using the: a) the normative content on the right to food and right to freedom from hunger, and b) the existence of the Human Rights Principles (PANTHER) in the program. The program will be assessed as to how it has either increased or decreased the promotion, protection, and fulfillment of the farmers' right to food.

While program evaluation is not identified here as a research method, the study draws guidance from Immink's (2014) practical approach(es) to programme analysis involving two tracks that are informed by the framework of the right to food. The first track focuses on analyzing the programme's "impacts on the protection and realization of the right to food of the food-insecure, the malnourished, and those vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity" (Immink, 2014, p. 48). On the other hand, the second track focuses on the "extent to which right to food principles/good governance practices are taken into account" (Immink, 2014, p. 48) both in the programme's design and implementation. This study agrees with Immink on the importance of determining the "positive, neutral or negatives impacts" (Immink, 2014 p. 48) not only on the enjoyment of the right to food but also on the "vulnerability to food insecurity and/or malnutrition" (Immink, 2014 p. 48) by specific population groups. Additionally, this study concurs with the idea that there is a need to look at the internal and external factors that can either condition the implementation of the

programme or contradict the intention of its implementation. This study looks at neoliberal ideology and the government's adoption of it as an external and internal factor that has affected the implementation of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program.

1.5 Philippine Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers, and Seeds (F.I.E.L.D.S.) Program²

Launched at the National Food Summit in Pampanga, northern Philippines on April 4, 2008, the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program was part of the Macapagal-Arroyo Administration's focus on sustaining growth and food security. The Program is part of the Philippine Productivity Rice Master Plan³ which was an attachment to Executive Order No. 725. The total investment for the program was PHP 43.7 billion and the Department of Agriculture (hereinafter DA) was the lead implementing agency. F.I.E.L.D.S. was a package of interventions in six areas, namely, **Fertilizers, Irrigation and Infrastructure, Extension, Education and Training, Loans, Dryers** and other postharvest facilities, and **Seeds**.

Under the *Fertilizer* component of the Program, the government planned to renew its advocacy on the use of organic fertilizers, the provision of support to rice farmers through the Local Government Units by means of discount coupons for both organic and inorganic fertilizers, and the budget allocation of PHP 500 million from the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF). Under the *Irrigation* component, the DA planned to spend PHP 6 billion on irrigation and another PHP 6 billion on infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads, roll-on-roll-off ferry ports and airports for agricultural cargo. The construction of small irrigation systems and the rehabilitation of selected irrigation systems by 2010 were also identified. Lastly, the government sought to restore 50,698 hectares of rice land and to rehabilitate 31,297 hectares.

Under *Extension, Education and Training* component of F.I.E.L.D.S., the DA, in coordination with other government agencies and with state universities and

² Information culled from "Bohol launches Rice Sufficiency Plan during F.I.E.L.D.S. Information and Tekno Klinik" <http://ati.da.gov.ph/rtc7/node/71> and "The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program" <http://ati.da.gov.ph/rtc1/agri-info/F.I.E.L.D.S.-program>.

³ The original document is entitled the Philippine Rice Self-Sufficiency Master Plan (2009-2010).

colleges, planned to continue implementing program and training interventions to produce more trainers and technicians on new agricultural technologies to boost farmers' education. PHP 5 billion was allocated for extension, education and training of farmers and agricultural extension workers, as well as for research and development on increasing yields and lowering production costs. Still under this component, supplemental information on several identified rice-related technologies were set to be distributed.

Under *Loans*, a total of PHP 20 billion worth of credit were to be made available for farmers, fisherfolk and other small rural borrowers. Under this component of F.I.E.L.D.S., the DA shall study how to maximize bank compliance to the Agri-Agra Law⁴. Low interest loans for rice farm inputs and other farm infra/machineries and Land Bank loan windows for inbred and hybrid rice production were also identified in this component.

Under *Dryers*, the Agriculture department planned to collaborate with the private sector in the establishment of integrated processing and trading centers, to provide different types of dryers through the DA-Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension (BPRE) and the DA-National Food Authority (hereinafter NFA). PHP 2 billion was allocated for the provision of dryers and other postharvest facilities.

Lastly, under the *Seeds* component of F.I.E.L.D.S., the DA planned to support seed growers, to target 600,000 hectares in 2008 for certified seeds and another 900,000 hectares for hybrid seeds for 2009-2010. PHP 9.2 billion was allocated for hybrid and certified seed production until 2010. There was also an assistance to rice farmers from the NFA for seed subsidy and stock procurement of fresh harvest.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Much has been written on the Philippines about poverty, the impacts of structural adjustment programs or neoliberal economic globalization, the state of the agriculture, or even corruption and bad governance. National and international human

⁴ Agri-Agra Law is Republic Act 10000 or the Agri-Agra Reform Credit Act of 2009 which provides for a credit and financing system for agriculture and agrarian reform through banking institutions.

rights groups and institutions have also written and reported about the country's state of human rights in general and state of socio-economic rights in particular. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (hereinafter FAO), in particular, has commissioned an assessment of the right to food in the Philippines, and was published in 2010. The *Philippines Right to Food Assessment*⁵ (hereinafter referred to as the *Philippines Assessment* or *Assessment*) is composed of three different studies that looked at a) the anatomy and causes of hunger, b) the country's legal framework pertaining to the right to food, and c) the government's safety nets and social protection policies and programs relevant to the right to food.

Given all the above, however, this study is still significant because, unlike the *Philippines Assessment*, for example, this research argues for a deeper, comprehensive, and historical understanding not only of the problem of hunger but most importantly the violation or fulfilment of the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and the right to adequate food of farmers in the country. The research takes the view that neoliberal ideology has had a profound role and significant impact on the Philippine government's approach to poverty, hunger, and the right to food. More than a distillation of what has been written about poverty and hunger among the poor and the farmers in the country, this study aims to provide a better understanding of how farmers' right to food have been realized or violated through the state's adoption of a neoliberal framework by looking at the particular government program of F.I.E.L.D.S. as both a case and a take-off point for elaboration and further discussion.

⁵ For the component on the anatomy and causes of hunger in the Philippines as part of the Right to Food Assessment, see Abad-Santos, C.O., Edillon, R.G., and Piza, S.F., 2010. Causes of Hunger and Analysis of its Causes. In Food and Agriculture Organization (ed.), *Right to Food Assessment Philippines*. For the component on the assessment of the Philippines' legal framework related to the right to food, see De los Reyes, V. and Diokno, M.S., 2010. The Filipinos' Right to Food – An Assessment of the Philippine Legal Framework Governing the Right to Food. In: Food and Agriculture Organization (ed.) *Right to Food Assessment Philippines*. For the component of the assessment of Philippine safety nets and social protection policies and program relevant to the right to right to food, see Edillon, R.G., 2010. Social Protection to Secure the Right to Food of Every Filipino: An Assessment of Safety Nets and Social Protection Policies and Programs. In: Food and Agriculture Organization (ed.) *Right to Food Assessment Philippines*.

1.7 Ethical Issues

The research relies on desk review and documentary research and resorts to various primary and secondary data sources that are publicly available. As the data are documents and records available and accessible to the public, privacy issues are not a concern and there is no need to keep data confidential. There are no ethical issues of concern.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

The organization of the rest of the thesis is as follows. The next chapter, Chapter II – the Conceptual Framework of the thesis – covers a discussion of the main bodies of literature around (a) the approaches to poverty and hunger, (b) the human rights norms and standards on the right to food which covers both the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and the right to adequate food, as well as related and relevant human rights, and (c) neoliberalism as an ideology. The chapter discusses how neoliberalism's assumptions and tenets impact on the solution to poverty and hunger, and on the fulfillment of farmers' right to food. Chapter III provides information on some key Philippine policies and laws that have affected agriculture and farmers, and the fulfillment of the right to food. This chapter covers a substantial discussion on the Philippines' experience of foreign debt, structural adjustments, and trade liberalization, all of which are components of what is now commonly referred to as the neoliberal agenda under the Washington Consensus. Chapter IV – F.I.E.L.D.S., the Right to Food, and Neoliberalism – contains the particular findings and analysis of the study with regards to the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration. It provides a discussion on how F.I.E.L.D.S. frames the problem and solution to hunger of Filipino farmers and how it complies with the norms and standards on the right to food. The chapter also discusses how neoliberal ideology or neoliberalism has influenced the Program. Chapter V contains the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes in detail the conceptual framework of the thesis and briefly discusses other related and relevant ideas. Before discussing the conceptual framework, five sets of ideas will be elaborated and explained. The first set of ideas involves the various approaches to the problem of poverty. This discussion is necessary as poverty is very much related to the issue of hunger, and ultimately to the fulfillment of human rights. The second set of ideas pertains to the two major approaches to hunger—the productionist and the non-productionist. While F.I.E.L.D.S. undeniably takes on a productionist approach, a discussion of non-productionist approaches is still very much relevant especially in assessing how the Program addresses the hunger problem. The third section of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of the international norms and standards on the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and the right to adequate food, including the P.A.N.T.H.E.R. human rights principles formulated by the FAO. In the succeeding subsection, there will be a comparison of the frameworks of food security, food self-sufficiency, and food sovereignty. The fifth section is devoted to a discussion of neoliberalism and its implications on the right to food. The chapter's last section will summarize the key points discussed.

This chapter argues that with regards to addressing the problem of hunger and fulfilling the human right to food, the non-productionist, political economy approach is still very much relevant today especially for farmers and agricultural workers. The fulfillment or violation of the right to food is partly a function of power and politics in society—who owns and controls resources and means of production, and how resources are distributed. Understanding the ideology of those in power is key to understanding how and why farmers continue to remain in poverty and unable to feed themselves in dignity. The chapter also argues that understanding the elements

of neoliberal ideology—the predominant governance framework in the last 40 years—is essential to uncovering the root causes of hunger and the fulfillment or violation of the right to food of farmers in the Philippines.

2.2 Approaches to Poverty

Sector	2006 ^{a/}			2009 ^{a/}			2012			Increase/ Decrease	
	Poverty Incidence	90% Confidence Interval		Poverty Incidence	90% Confidence Interval		Poverty Incidence	90% Confidence Interval		2006-2009	2009-2012
		Lower Limit	Upper Limit		Lower Limit	Upper Limit		Lower Limit	Upper Limit		
Philippines^{b/}	26.6	25.7	27.4	26.3	25.4	27.1	25.2	24.4	26.1	(0.3)	(1.1)
Fishermen	41.2	37.2	45.2	41.3	37.5	45.1	39.2	35.1	43.2	(0.1)	(2.1)
Farmers	38.5	36.6	40.5	38.0	35.8	40.2	38.3	35.8	40.7	(0.5)	0.3
Children	35.2	34.0	36.4	35.3	34.1	36.6	35.2	33.9	36.5	0.1	(0.1)
Self-employed and Unpaid Family Workers ^{c/}	30.6	29.1	32.1	29.9	28.2	31.5	29.0	27.2	30.7	(0.7)	(0.9)
Women	25.9	25.0	26.9	25.7	24.8	26.7	25.6	24.6	26.7	(0.2)	(0.1)
Youth	21.1	20.2	22.0	21.6	20.7	22.6	22.3	21.2	23.3	0.5	0.7
Migrant and Formal Sector	16.0	15.2	16.9	16.8	15.9	17.7	16.6	15.6	17.5	0.8	(0.2)
Senior Citizens	16.9	15.8	18.0	16.1	15.2	17.0	16.2	15.2	17.1	(0.8)	0.1
Individuals residing in urban areas	12.6	11.6	13.6	12.6	11.6	13.6	13.0	11.9	14.1	0	0.4

Figure 2.1 Poverty Incidence for Basic Sectors: 2006, 2009 and 2012 (PSA, 2014).

While poverty is not the main focus of this thesis, there is a need to discuss approaches to the issue of poverty here for two important reasons. First, Filipino farmers, according to the national statistics agency, have been among the groups experiencing consistent and historical poverty¹ in the Philippines (Albert, et al, 2013). The second and most important reason is that hunger is very much related to poverty. While not all who are hungry are poor, it is the case that the poor are often hungry mainly because they lack income or the means to produce or access food. This section provides a discussion on the classical approach to poverty, then on the relationship between poverty and human rights, and finally on the poverty approach of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (hereinafter NAPC) of the Philippines.

¹ See Figure 2.1 Poverty Incidence for Basic Sectors: 2006, 2009 and 2012. Source: PSA, 2014.

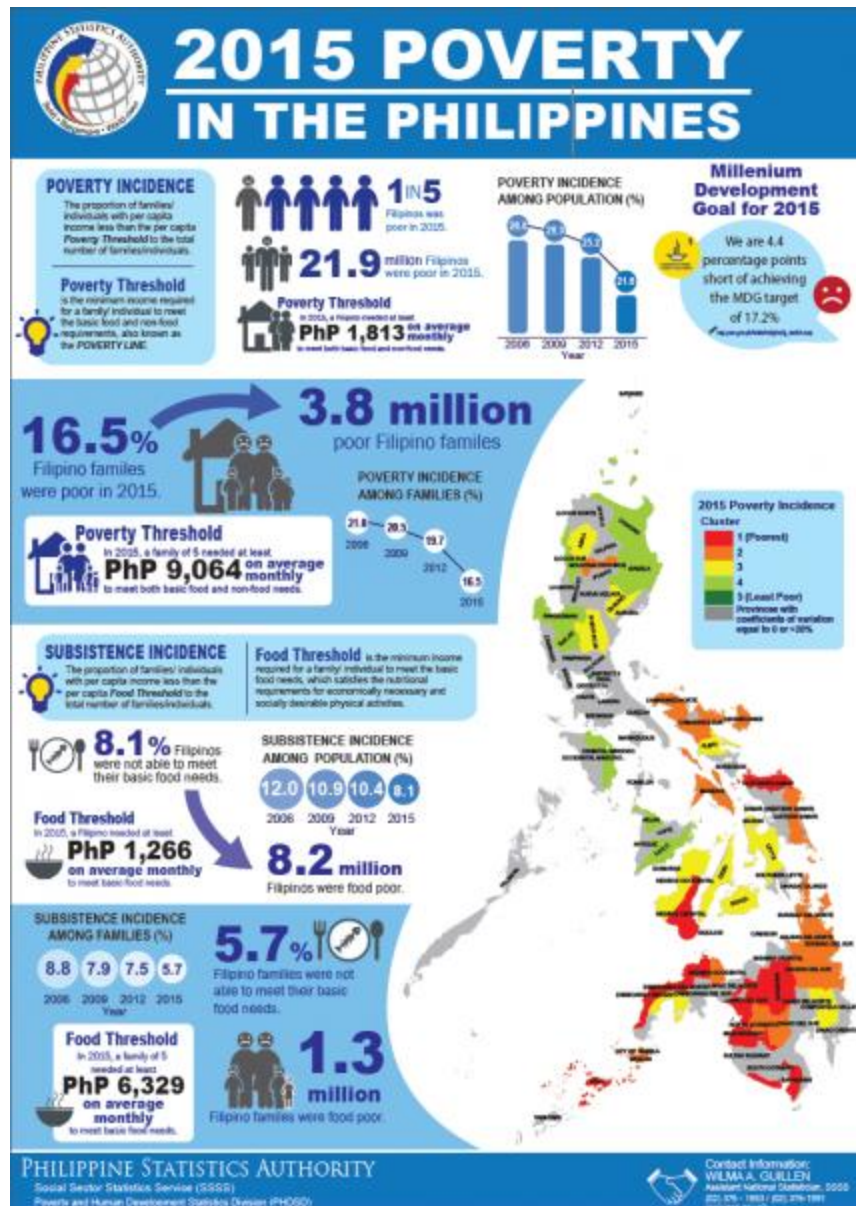


Figure 2.2 2015 Poverty in the Philippines (PSA, 2016a)

2.2.1 Poverty as Economic Deprivation or Lack of Income

When 2016 news reports say, for example, there are at least 26 million Filipinos living in poverty or a little over 12 million living in extreme poverty², embedded therein as the measure of poverty contingent upon income. Indeed, the

² See Yap, DJ., 2016. 12M Filipinos living in extreme poverty. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, [Online] 18 March. Available at: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/775062/12m-filipinos-living-in-extreme-poverty> [Accessed 20 October 2016].

Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) defines *poverty incidence* as the proportion of Filipinos whose per capita income/expenditure is less than the per capita *poverty threshold* to the total number of individuals (PSA, 2016b, online). The poverty threshold or the poverty line is “the minimum income/expenditure required for a family/individual to meet the basic food and non-food requirements” (PSA, 2007, online). Additionally, *subsistence incidence* is the proportion of Filipinos whose incomes fall below the *food threshold* or “the minimum income required for a family/individual to meet basic food needs, which satisfies the nutritional requirements for economically necessary and socially desirable physical activities” (PSA, 2007, online). As has been practiced in the Philippines and the world over, the standard measure of poverty and food poverty has been based on individual or family income.

2.2.1.1 Cost-Price Squeeze Theory of Mass Poverty

One poverty approach related to economic deprivation or lack of income is Tayengco’s (2008) cost-price squeeze theory of mass poverty which states that “perfectly competitive farmers who operate under conditions of (a) near perfect market competition, (b) price inelastic demand and (c) imperfectly competitive suppliers of farm inputs are perpetually subjected to *cost-price squeeze* that makes farming hardly profitable in the long-term” (Tayengco, 2008, p. 7). Mass poverty is created when farmers who are solely dependent on farming as source of livelihood will generally earn low income and will find difficulty securing employment in non-farm enterprises. The *cost-price squeeze* phenomenon is a situation when price is either equal to or below the cost of production (Tayengco, 2008, p.25).

The theory further states that there is a “poverty trap in Philippine agriculture” (Tayengco, 2008, p. 59) involving factors such as (a) “forces that abet the cost-price squeeze phenomenon” (Tayengco, 2008, p. 59), (b) a supply and demand mismatch between farming skills and labor, and that of non-farm skills; and (c) “limited job opportunities in the non-farm sector and limited access of the poor to financial and technological resources, and social services” (Tayengco, 2008), p.59). Tayengco (2008) suggests that in order to successfully take on the forces that abet poverty, the government, for example, should establish marketing structures and

processes that promote and protect the interest and income of farmer-producers similar to those adopted in advanced and industrialized countries. The strategy of “making near perfect market competition less [far from] perfect” (Tayengco, 2008, p. 7), simply means that government can and should adopt policies and programs, particularly around marketing, all with the aim of achieving and sustaining a decent income/profit for farmers and other rural-agricultural workers.

2.2.1.2 Poverty Reduction and Food Security Strategies of International Financial Institutions (IFIs)

It should be noted that discussions on the poverty reduction and food security strategies of IFIs are very much tied to (a) the discussions on neoliberalism, neoliberal ideology, and the Washington Consensus, which is under section 2.6 of the current chapter (see pages 41-46), and (b) to the discussions on the Philippines’ experience of debt and neoliberal economic policies found in section 3.3 of the succeeding chapter (see pages 50-70). However, the aim of this section is to provide a quick historical account of the poverty reduction and food security strategies promoted by IFIs.

In 1986, with its policy study on poverty and hunger, the World Bank asserted that “adequate income is essential for ensuring food security” (World Bank, 1986, p. 13) and that “income growth was the largest single influence on the dietary improvement between 1970 and 1980” (World Bank, 1986, p. 3). As evidence for this they cited East Asia and the Middle East regions that had experienced rapid economic growth during the 10-year period. As an option for national policy, the World Bank then suggested “raising the real income of households... by giving people the opportunity to earn adequate income and by ensuring an adequate food supply through domestic production or imports” (World Bank, 1986, p. 6). Transfer payments in cash or in kind was then identified as the most efficient way of increasing real incomes of the poor (World Bank, 1986, p. 7). The study concluded that the persistence of food insecurity is a function, not of food supply or food prices, but of weak household and national purchasing power (World Bank, 1986, p. 13).

Then in the 1990 World Development Report, the World Bank introduced its strategy for poverty alleviation for government action which included the following:

The first leg or element is to promote the productive use of labor, the poor's most abundant asset, primarily through sustainable labor intensive growth. This calls for policies that direct market incentives, social and political institution, infrastructure, and technology to that end. The second leg of the strategy is provision of basic social services to the poor so they can take full advantage of the opportunity of growth, particularly primary education, preventive health care, family planning, and nutrition. The final 'half leg', not to be forgotten, is a program of well-targeted transfers and safety nets to assist those who fall behind and those suffering temporary setbacks (World Bank, 1995, p.69).

In 2001, a decade after, the above recommendations for poverty-reduction were reiterated in the Bank's assessment of poverty in the Philippines. The report noted that poverty in the country is a "largely rural phenomenon³ despite rapid urbanization" (World Bank, 2001, p. 3), and that the agriculture sector had the highest poverty incidence and the slowest rate for poverty reduction. The assessment argued for "growth with equity" or "pro-poor growth" which meant "faster agricultural growth and a swifter structural shift out of agriculture are key to poverty reduction" (World Bank, 2001, p. ix). The Bank's poverty-reduction framework included (a) creating opportunities for the poor through broad-based growth and asset build-up; (b) increasing security for the poor by reducing

³ The ADB noted a similar observation in its 2009 report on the Philippines, claiming that the rural phenomenon of poverty is "partly attributable to decade-long problems in agriculture" (ADB, 2009, p. 19). The report added that growth in the agriculture sector has not been sustained for reasons such as (a) typhoons and bad weather, (b) weak property rights and the failure of the state-led agrarian reform, (c) inadequate delivery of agricultural services, and (d) weak governance and corruption (ADB, 2009, p. 19).

vulnerability and helping them manage risks; and (c) empowering the poor by making institutions accountable. The medium- to long-term solution to poverty, the Bank asserted, requires a “continued structural shift of employment and output from agriculture to the more productive non-agricultural sectors of the economy” (World Bank, 2001, p. 10). The Bank suggested for the Philippines to adopt “pro-poor growth” policies which involved sustaining growth through macro-economic stability and good governance (i.e. anti-corruption, rule of law, and people’s empowerment, and participation in good governance and accountability). The country should also aim for (a) higher agricultural productivity—investments to improve infrastructure and support services in the sector; (b) accelerating the move out of agriculture; (c) reduction of high food prices through changes in rice trade policies (liberalization) so as to benefit net rice consumers, which, according to the report, are the poor; and (d) increased assets for the poor through *market-based land reform*⁴ and investment in human capital—the poor’s access to basic social services and to social safety nets. The Bank’s poverty assessment also suggested adoption of (e) regional policy through clustering in order to spur growth and development.

In 2008, the World Bank’s World Development Report put focus back on agriculture arguing that (a) agriculture is “a fundamental instrument for sustainable development and poverty reduction” (World Bank, 2008, p.1); (b) that there is a need for “a productivity revolution in smallholder farming” (World Bank, 2008, p.1) if agriculture is to be the basis for economic growth; and (c) that income inequality must be addressed through “a comprehensive approach that pursues multiple pathways out of poverty—shifting to high-value agriculture, decentralizing nonfarm economic activity to rural areas, and providing assistance to help move people out of agriculture” (World Bank, 2008, p.2). The report’s core message – “agriculture for development” – involves enhancing local, national, and global governance in order to fulfill agriculture’s so-called “great promise” for faster growth, reduction in poverty, and environmental sustainability. Among the top priorities of this “agriculture for development” agenda include increasing poor households’ assets,

⁴ The World Bank’s market-based land reform will be discussed in the section on Agrarian/Land Reform in the Philippines in Chapter III as part of background discussion on select policies and programs adopted by the Philippines that came partly as conditionalities of loans from international financial institutions.

increasing the productivity of smallholders and of the agricultural sector, and creating opportunities for the rural poor within the rural nonfarm economy.

Since 1978 the International Fund for Agricultural Development (hereinafter IFAD)⁵ has been working with the Philippine government in financing projects related to agricultural development. IFAD's work is anchored on "eradicating rural poverty" (IFAD, 2009, p. 2) with the goals of "enabling the rural poor to improve their incomes and food security, and providing better food, education and health care for their families" (IFAD, 2009, p. 3). IFAD's loans have supported projects aimed at (a) decentralization efforts through institutional capacity-building, (b) improvement of access to markets, technology, and rural financial services, (c) private-sector participation, (d) improvement of natural resources management, and (e) improvement of and sustainable access to land and water by the poor. IFAD's USD 15.9 million loan supported the government's 2009-2013 Rice Self-Sufficiency Plan specifically in the areas of acquisition of quality rice seeds for improved production⁶, and the rehabilitation and development of irrigation systems.

2.2.2 Poverty and Human Rights

Economic deprivation or lack of income has been the standard component of poverty however, the United Nations (UN) now acknowledge the multidimensional character of poverty including the various and intersecting deprivations it embodies. According to the UN Human Rights Office, poverty entails "a lack of both income and the basic capabilities to live in dignity" (OHCHR, 2012, p. 2). This matches with the poverty definition of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter referred to as CESCR or the Committee)—the treaty body responsible for monitoring state compliance to the ICESCR. For the Committee, poverty is "a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights"

⁵ See IFAD, 2009. Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty.

⁶ IFAD's support to the government's rice self-sufficiency plan was reflected in the Rapid Food Production Enhancement Programme (RaFPEP) that had two separate but mutually-dependent subprogrammes namely, the Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project (RaSSFip) and the Irrigated Rice Production Enhancement Project (IRPEP).

(CESCR, 2001). Poverty is both “a cause and a consequence of human rights violations and an enabling condition for other violations” (CESCR, 2001). Persons living in poverty face multidimensional challenges towards accessing and enjoying their human rights and entitlements. They experience many deprivations that are interrelated and mutually-reinforcing which then leads to an inability to realize human rights for themselves, and ultimately further impoverishment.

The UN takes a rights-based approach to poverty recognizing the poor person as both a rights holder and an agent of change. This approach not only recognizes the dignity and autonomy of the poor person but also empowers them to participate both in the design of policy and in making duty bearers accountable. The approach also recognizes that persons living in poverty experience an array and intersecting layers of disadvantage, discrimination and exclusion based on age, ethnicity, gender, language, race, or other status.

Adopted by the Human Rights Council in 2012, the *Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty* is “a tool for designing and implementing poverty reduction and eradication policies, and a guide to how to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of persons living in extreme poverty in all areas of public policy ” (OHCHR, 2012). The Guiding Principles draw on international human rights law and even they are mainly concerned with severe poverty and persons living in extreme poverty, they do not preclude the application of its specific obligations and recommendation towards general poverty or persons living in general poverty.

The Guiding Principles took particular attention to the right to adequate food and nutrition underscoring the importance of adequate food, and noting that “lack of food sovereignty compromises autonomy and dignity” (OHCHR, 2012, p. 22). The Guiding Principles made ten recommendations for states. The recommendations extremely relevant to farmers living in poverty include (a) the adoption of “a national strategy to ensure food and nutrition security for all, based on human rights principles” (OHCHR, 2012, p. 22); (b) “ensure access to productive resources, including land, forests and fisheries, in order for persons living in poverty to produce food for themselves and their families” (OHCHR, 2012, p. 23); and (c) the implementation of “effective land distribution and agrarian reform programmes, especially in areas in which land concentration threatens access to livelihoods for rural communities”

(OHCHR, 2012, p. 23) as well as the adoption of “preventive measures to avoid land and water grabbing” (OHCHR, 2012, p. 23).

What then is the implication of a rights-based approach to poverty on to the investigation of F.I.E.L.D.S. and the Philippines’ approach to hunger and to the right to food? The simple answer is that poverty, hunger or even the right to food cannot be viewed simply through the lens of economic deprivation or lack of income. If hunger is tied to poverty, and poverty is not only a cause and a consequence of human rights violations, but also a deprivation of several aspects of human existence aside from income, then any solution to hunger – and by extension the realization of the right to food of each and every citizen – should logically have a multi-dimensional thrust. As a government program focused on improving rice production, and supposedly enhancing rice farmers’ productivity, the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program’s approach is arguably inadequate.

2.2.3 The Philippine Government’s Approach to Poverty

A scholar noted that “the causes of poverty in the Philippines are linked to far more deep-rooted structural issues of power” (Reid, 2004). Poverty in the Philippines has a long history dating back from colonial times whereby ownership of the primary mode of production – land – had been concentrated on the hands of elites in society. Poverty in the country continues to be a function of the political and the economic as resources, wealth, and income, as well as the power to decide over the distribution of resources and wealth, continues to be concentrated in the hands of very few families. Another scholar famously described the Philippine situation as a product of the “anarchy of families” (McCoy, 1994). The poverty resulting from a colonial inequality in the distribution of resources and of power to decide over resource distribution has been exacerbated by the government’s adoption of macroeconomic and trade policies from the 1970s to the present. Neoliberal economic policies and globalization, as well as the existence of a political-economic oligarchy and institutionalized corruption, all contribute to weakening the Philippine state’s ability to genuinely address poverty and its root causes. For a poverty strategy to be effective in the country, it must be informed not just by economic realities but by the historical, social and political factors as well.

Addressing poverty⁷ is one of the highest priorities of the government ever since the 1986 People Power Revolution that ousted the Marcos Dictatorship. Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution declares as state policy the “promot[ion of] a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.”

At the time of the implementation of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program, the government, through the National Economic and Development Authority (hereinafter NEDA), had the 2004-2010 Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) the main goal of which was to “fight poverty by building prosperity for the greater number of Filipino people” (NEDA, 2004, p. 1). While the plan had a 10-point agenda, its antipoverty measures revolved around five goals such as: (a) enhancing livelihood activities through credit support and capacity building; (b) reforming assets which include agrarian reform and ancestral domain; (c) improving access to and affordability of essential services such as water, health care and medicines; (d) protection of vulnerable groups such as children, youth with special needs, women in difficult circumstances, persons with disabilities and the elderly; and (e) empowering the poor through the KALAHI-CIDSS⁸ or Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services Project and through initiatives like the Gawad Kalinga and Habitat for Humanity (NEDA, 2004, p. x).

With regards to the Agriculture sector, the MTPDP’s clear focus was on the “agribusiness approach to countryside development” (NEDA, 2004, p. 29) which involves (a) “breaking out from subsistence agriculture” and expanding the base of production, and increasing and diversifying the [farm’s] marketable surplus; (b)

⁷ Post-1986 administrations had different approaches to poverty. The Macapagal-Arroyo administration used the term “poverty eradication” in its 2004-2010 Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

⁸ The legal basis of the Macapagal-Arroyo Administration’s KALAHI poverty-reduction program is Memorandum Circular No. 33, signed on 8 November 2002. The circular institutionalized KALAHI as the administration’s overarching program whereby all poverty reduction strategies and project anchored on. The National Anti-Poverty Commission served as the coordinating and oversight body for the implementation of the KALAHI. The five antipoverty thrusts of KALAHI include (a) asset reform, (b) human development and social services, (c) livelihood and employment, (d) social protection and security from violence; and (e) participation of the poor in decision-making (NEDA, 2004, p. 155). KALAHI-CIDSS had no reference in the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program, and vice versa.

improving the competitiveness of the country's agricultural products, and (c) reforms in governance and institutions to ensure that gains in production and efficiency corresponds to welfare gains for both farmer and consumer. Under the Agribusiness heading, the MTPDP identified two major goals with corresponding targets and activities. The first goal was the development of at least 2 million hectares of new land for agribusiness as this is said to provide the 2 million jobs as part of the Macapagal-Arroyo Administration's targeted 10 million jobs (NEDA, 2004, p. 30). The second goal was to "make food plentiful at competitive prices"—the reduction in cost of "wage goods" such as rice, sugar, vegetables, poultry, pork and fish, as well as non-wage goods like corn (NEDA, 2004, p. 35). Most importantly, the second goal also sought to continue the "fight for self-sufficiency in rice production by increasing price and production efficiency and competitiveness" (NEDA, 2004, p. 35).

Aside from the NEDA and the MTPDP, the government also has the National Anti-Poverty Commission (hereinafter NAPC), which was created by Republic Act 8425 (RA 8425) or the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act, adopts the 'minimum basic needs' approach. RA 8425 identifies fourteen basic sectors to be part of the Commission and one these is for farmers and landless rural workers. The law declares as one of state policies the adoption of "area-based, sectoral and focused intervention to poverty alleviation" that will empower every poor Filipino family to meet their *minimum basic needs*⁹ (RA 8425). The most recent Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Agenda has a multi-dimensional approach to poverty covering social, ecological, economic, and governance dimensions¹⁰.

⁹ The minimum basic needs identified in Philippine law are in the areas of (a) survival—health, food and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, and clothing, (b) security—shelter, peace and order, public safety, income and livelihood, and (c) enabling—basic education and literacy, participation in community development, and family and psycho-social care. The *minimum basic needs* or *basic needs* approach, introduced by the International Labor Organization in 1976, is one of several means of measuring absolute poverty. The orientation of this approach is consumption therefore it defines absolute poverty along a minimum amount of resources required for long-term well-being. It is a precursor of the human development approach.

¹⁰ See Administrative Order No. 21, Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations governing Republic Act No. 8425. The social dimension covered reforms in access to quality services in education, health, housing, and other services necessary for citizens to meet basic human needs and decent living. The ecological dimension covered reforms in ensuring effective and sustainable utilization of natural resources with the emphasis of social acceptability and active participation of basic sectors. The economic dimension of the SRA covered reforms in assets and access to economic opportunities, and natural and man-made resources. The governance dimension covered reforms at democratization and

The *Philippines Assessment*¹¹ (de los Reyes and Diokno, 2010) looked at the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act and found that it “does not specifically address access to food” (de los Reyes and Diokno, 2010, p.17). The law only facilitates the poor’s access to credit through microfinance services and special credit windows within government financial institutions. The Assessment found that in relation to state obligations on the right to food, the law only satisfied the obligation on progressive realization—through its adoption of an integrated social reform agenda in the national anti poverty action agenda, and the obligation to fulfill—through the NAPC. In terms of access, the Social Reform Act only addresses credit and does not include measures like feeding programs or food aid, for example. The Assessment stressed that the law adopts, not a rights-based approach, but the limited basic needs approach.

Charity Approach	Needs Approach	Rights-Based Approach
Focus on input not outcome	Focus on input and outcome	Focus on process and outcome
Emphasizes increasing charity	Emphasizes meeting needs	Emphasizes realizing rights
Recognizes moral responsibility of rich towards poor	Recognizes needs as valid claims	Recognizes individual and group rights as claims toward legal and moral duty-bearers
Individuals are seen as victims	Individuals are objects of development interventions	Individuals and groups are empowered to claim their rights
Individuals deserve assistance	Individuals deserve assistance	Individuals are entitled to assistance
Focuses on manifestation of problems	Focuses on immediate causes of problems	Focuses on structural causes and their manifestations

Figure 2.3 Rights-based Approach vs. Needs-based Approach vs. Charity Approach (Boesen and Martin, 2007, p. 10)

for the effective participation of basic sectors in decision-making and management processes especially in areas concerning their interests and welfare.

¹¹ See De los Reyes and Diokno, 2010. The Filipinos’ Right to Food: An Assessment of the Philippine Legal Framework Government the Right to Food, as part of the *Philippines: Right to Food Assessment*.

A rights-based approach to poverty emphasizes the realization of human rights and the strategies would involve empowering the poor – and farmers, as in the case of F.I.E.L.D.S. – towards claiming their human rights, including the right to food. On the other hand, a basic needs approach to poverty – just like in the Philippine government’s Social Reform and Poverty Agenda – the focus is on meeting the basic needs of people which is done through “interventions” that are institutional. With a rights-based approach to poverty, assistance to the poor and to the food insecure are considered as entitlements—the assistance is part of the state’s obligations. However, with a needs-based approach, assistance is what the government offers to the poor as some either a reward or punishment. The poor and the food insecure are recipients of government programs. For a comparison of the rights-based approach with a needs-based approach and a charity approach to poverty and development, see Figure 2.3 above.

2.3 Approaches to Hunger

This section provides a discussion of the two main approaches to hunger—productionist and non-productionist. Productionist approaches treat food as a commodity and hunger as a function of supply therefore the solution to the problem involves increasing production and productivity of farmers. Non-productionist approaches, on the other hand, sees food either as an economic good or as a human right, and that hunger is either a function of supply and demand, or as a matter of injustice. Within the non-production approach, the most important is the political economy perspective which includes the classic work of Amartya Sen involving hunger and entitlements. Hunger as viewed within the human right to food can be considered taking on both a political economy perspective and a productionist approach.

This section will also discuss the Philippines’ Accelerated Hunger-Mitigation Program or AHMP which was implemented alongside the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program during the Macapagal-Arroyo administration. AHMP is an approach to hunger that embodies a hybrid of a productionist and a needs-based approach to hunger. Unlike in a non-productionist approach to hunger, AHMP sees the economy

and the market as key to the solution. And following a needs-based approach, AHMP sees the food insecure as recipients of government interventions or “measures” rather than being rights holders who are entitled to claim their right to food.

2.3.1 Productionist Approaches vs. Non-Productionist Approaches

On the nature and causes of hunger, scholarship ranges from documentation of the phenomena as a uniquely personal experience to one that indicates social development and well-being. For Buttel (2000), however, hunger has been “centered in much ideological work and theoretical contestation [and sanctions] the legitimacy of social institutions” (Buttel, 2000, p. 16). Buttel’s (2000) “Typology of Theoretical Perspectives on Hunger in Developing Countries” identified and classified pre-existing perspectives on the causes and corresponding solutions to hunger (see Table 1, next page). The weakest of these theories, Buttel argued, are the ‘productionist theories’ for they do not recognize the political nature of the problem and the solution to hunger (Buttel, 2000 p. 16). The productionist theories see market institutions in benign ways and that poverty is simply a function of economic growth and capital investment rather than as a dysfunction or inadequacy of the market. On the other hand, the ‘political economy’ tradition, which belongs to the non-productionist theories, best incorporates the insights of the two productionist theories of ‘*modernizationism*’ and ‘*productionist neo-Malthusianism*’, and the non-productionist theory of ‘*ecological neo-Malthusianism*’. According to Buttel, the political economy perspective also addresses political and social dynamics—the inequality and social relations of dominance, which the three other perspectives tend to downplay (Buttel, 2000, p. 17, 20). Overall, Buttel asserts that the *political economy* approach triumphs over ‘productionist’ theories on hunger.

Amartya Sen’s (1981) classic work, *Poverty and Famines*, is one example of the political economy approach to hunger. He debunked the idea that food insecurity is a function of food availability and proved that it was instead tied to *entitlements* or how much an individual can command access to food through various mechanisms or relationships such as through labor, trade, welfare or others. Sen demonstrated that despite the availability of food, famine and hunger still existed mainly because of the shifts or distortions in entitlement.

Table 2.1 Typology of Theoretical Perspectives on Hunger in Developing Countries (Buttel and Raynolds, 1989 as cited in Buttel, 2000, p.17)

ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING THE ROLE OF INCREASED FOOD PRODUCTION IN ALLEVIATING HUNGER	ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING THE ROLE OF POPULATION GROWTH	
	Non-Malthusian	Neo-Malthusian
<p>“Productionist” Increased food production is central in reducing hunger.</p>	<p>Modernizationism Hunger is caused by a lack of modernization and technology. Hunger is reduced through progressive economic development and global integration.</p>	<p>Productionist Neo-Malthusianism Hunger is caused by food production falling behind population growth. Hunger is reduced through agricultural R&D and increased agricultural productivity.</p>
<p>“Nonproductionist” Nonproductionist factors such as the reduction of inequality, increased security among the poor, reduction of economic dependency, are most central in reducing hunger.</p>	<p>Political Economy Hunger is caused by social inequality and poverty produced both locally and globally. Hunger is reduced through lessening inequality and increasing citizenship rights and by reframing global institutions and trade.</p>	<p>Ecological Neo-Malthusianism Hunger is caused by population growth and environmental degradation. Hunger is reduced through redesigning policy, technology and institutions to reduce and bring population and consumption in line with resource limitations.</p>

The World Bank’s 1986 policy study on poverty and hunger had more or less agreed with Sen by claiming that food insecurity was tied to (a) a “lack of purchasing power”, (b) “a redistribution of purchasing power and resources” (World Bank, 1986, p. 10), and (c) trade and income relief measures (World Bank, 1986, p. 11). The Bank noted, however, that all these can be achieved most effectively through the market and less so via the state. Hunger is an economic problem of supply, demand, and income (or purchasing power), and not a political one involving rights and justice for those vulnerable to food insecurity.

The former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food¹², in 2009, also echoed the political economy perspective by pointing out that the question of hunger is tied not only to production but to “marginalization, deepening inequalities, and social injustice” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2). A billion people are hungry not because food is unavailable but because they “are too poor to buy the food that is available” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2). The primary source of the present hunger situation, added De Schutter, is “in modes of production that have made small-scale farming generally non-viable, relegating it to subsistence agriculture” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2). Small farmers, De Schutter contends, have been pushed to the margins and forgotten from public policies mainly because they were neither a political constituency nor an economic sector. Hunger, is also “primarily a problem of unscrupulous employers and traders, of an increasingly concentrated input providers sector, or of insufficient safety nets to support the poor” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 3). For De Schutter hunger is “not a calamity” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2) but a “developmental process” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2) involving the historical robbery of small farmers’ livelihoods. Finally, still on the political economic argument, and tying it to Sen’s work, the Food Rapporteur pointed to asking questions like (a) how effective certain types of agriculture development are in increasing production, (b) what the impacts will they produce, and who actually loses, gains, or gains the most in the process (De Schutter, 2009, p. 6).

2.3.2 Accelerated Hunger-Mitigation Program (AHMP)

In April 2007, then-president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 616 creating an Anti-Hunger Task Force composed of various government agencies and mandating it to widen the implementation of the Accelerated Hunger-Mitigation Program (hereinafter AHMP) which was initially formulated by NEDA and had been implemented by the National Nutrition Council (NNC) since July 2006.

¹² Prof. Olivier De Schutter from Belgium was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council as Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food on March 26, 2008 and his mandated ended in 2014.

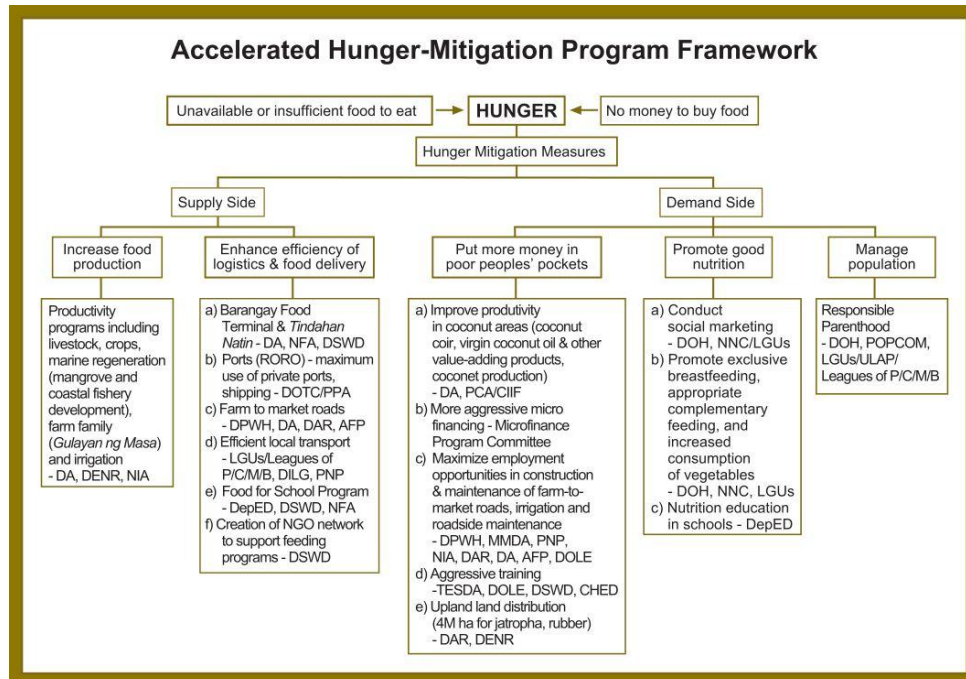


Figure 4. Accelerated Hunger-Mitigation Program Framework (NNC, 2011)

AHMP's main objective was to “cut hunger incidence by half within the year” (NNC, 2011) by following a supply-demand economic framework whereby hunger is understood as a product of two factors—unavailability or insufficient of food, and lack of money/resources to buy food. The first factor is a result of low food production and a poor system of food distribution, whereas the second factor is a product of a combination of a) low income or low capacity to improve income, b) lack of knowledge on good nutrition, and c) overpopulation and poor family planning. Despite international recognition that hunger is a function of access to and not of the availability of food, AHMP's solution still covered improving food productivity. The program also identified enhancing food logistics and delivery, proving the food insecure education, skills training, and support services towards employment-income generation and population management, and distribution of upland land.

Food First International Network (FIAN)-Philippines argued that AHMP “falls short” (FIAN Philippines, 2008, p.25) of its analysis as to why there is persistent and widespread hunger and poverty in the country. FIAN contended that while AHMP had a simplistic explanation and solution to the poor's income situation, the program did not actually address the lack of access of peasants and agricultural workers to

productive resources such as land, seeds, water, credit and other essential support services. AHMP is also short-sighted as it is limited to the promotion of jobs, nutrition education, family planning, microfinance, and distribution of upland lands that are ironically not for the production of food but for jathropa, a type of agrofuel, and rubber plants. The program's land distribution component also did not actually cover large private landholdings or sugarcane and coconut lands. As AHMP sought to distribute around 4 million hectares of upland for jathropa and rubber plants, FIAN Philippines criticized the government's priority on cultivating agrofuels arguing then that the plan will not only decrease land for food production but it will negatively impact the agrarian reform program (2008, p.25). Lastly, FIAN also pointed to transparency issues with AHMP claiming there were no consultations with civil society particularly with the program's targeted areas.

As part of the *Philippines Right to Food Assessment*, AHMP was evaluated as a social protection mechanism, and it was found that it "could not be mobilized to respond to an emergency situation" (Edillon, 2010, p.23) especially in the context of the 2008 food price crisis. The program could not produce immediate results as its institutional mechanism was simply "too cumbersome" (Edillon, 2010, p. 23) and not decentralized. Contrary to FIAN's assessment, Edillon (2010) claimed that AHMP's interventions "address the underlying and root causes of hunger, except for a major factor--shocks" (2010, p. 26) except for shocks. AHMP "falls short" of being a social protection mechanism since it had: (a) "no program to mobilize and encourage saving", (b) "no intervention to prolong the shelf-life of produce", (c) "no program to improve inventory management," (Edillon, 2010, p. 26) and (d) no social or micro-insurance component. Finally, Edillon argues that AHMP could be made more effective through "decentralized implementation" (Edillon, 2010, p. 27).

How should the problem of hunger be approached? This study takes the view that hunger is a complex problem but that its solution would likewise be complex. The "bias" of this study is that it focuses not just on the food insecurity of farmers but also on the realization or violation of their right to food. This study is not simply about the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program but mainly about the farmers who are supposedly the major stakeholder and beneficiary of this rice self-sufficiency plan. Starting from Sen's (1981) work, literature strongly confirms the political *and*

economic nature of hunger. However, the Philippines seems to be stuck in the “purely economic” framing of food insecurity which has then resulted to programs that are inadequate or totally fails at addressing the persistent and massive hunger problem among Filipinos.

2.4 The Human Right to Food

The international norms and standards on the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and the right to adequate food – both collectively used here as the human right to food or the right to food – are drawn from international human rights law which includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the ICESCR, and other conventions¹³ most of which the Philippines is party and signatory to. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) is the body that reviews and monitors state compliance with ICESCR obligations including those on the right to food. The Committee, just like other treaty bodies, issues *general comments* or *general observations* wherein the rights and obligations of states are clarified. The scope¹⁴ of the right to food has been clarified by the Committee in 1999 under *General Comment No. 12*¹⁵. In addition to the Committee, there is also the *Special Rapporteur* on the right to food whose mandate includes, among other things, investigation and communications with governments regarding violations of the right to food.

Aside from international human rights law, the right to food is also included in *soft law instruments* or non-legally binding international human rights instruments such as recommendations, guidelines, resolutions, or declarations. One

¹³ The right to food is also recognized in Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The respective treaty bodies of these conventions also process complaints related to the right to food so long as they are related to the concerned right.

¹⁴ The Vienna Declaration asserts the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights. The right to food, therefore, is linked with other human rights such as but not limited to the right to health, right to life, right to water, right to adequate housing, right to education, right to work and to social security, freedom of association and right to take part in public affairs, right to information, and freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. This means that the norms and standards of other human rights related to the right to food also apply. See OHCHR, 2010 on the link between the right to food and other rights.

¹⁵ See CESCR, 1999. General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food.

good example of this pertaining to the right to food is the *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security* (hereinafter Voluntary Guidelines) adopted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council in 2004. FAO is a UN agency whose mandate is not particularly on monitoring compliance or implementation of the right to food, but raising global nutrition levels and agricultural productivity, and improving the lives of the rural populace.¹⁶

2.4.1 International Norms and Standards on the Fundamental Right to Freedom from Hunger and the Right to Adequate Food

Aside from the General Comment No. 12 on the right to adequate food, other comments of the Committee are also relevant, such as: (a) General Comment No. 3, on the nature of the legal obligations of States parties to the ICESCR, (b) General Comment No. 8, on the relationship between economic sanctions and respect for economic, social and cultural rights, and (c) General Comment No. 2, on international technical assistance measures.

General Comment No. 12 laid out the normative content (or core content) as well as state obligations and the grounds for violation of the right to food. The key normative content of the right to food are availability¹⁷, accessibility¹⁸, and adequacy¹⁹.

The right to food is not an argument for the right to be fed as many would commonly mistake, but mainly a legal argument for a right to feed oneself or one's family in dignity. It is a right for one, or in community with others, to physically and

¹⁶ Aside from this, the FAO, in 2006, created the Right to Food Unit which was directed at supporting member states with the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines.

¹⁷ *Availability* means either food is available either from natural resources like with food production, land cultivation, animal husbandry, fishing, or hunting, or from the market. See CESCR, 1999. General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food.

¹⁸ *Accessibility* means either economic or physical access. The former means affordability of food that does not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights. The latter means that food is accessible to everyone especially for vulnerable individuals such as children, the sick, older person, or person with disability. Accessibility also applies to populations in remote areas, victims of conflicts, disasters and calamities, as well as those in prison. See CESCR, 1999. General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food.

¹⁹ *Adequacy* is tied to the notion of sustainability—that food is available and accessible for present and future generations. Adequacy also means food satisfies *dietary needs, cultural acceptability, and safety*. See CESCR, 1999. General Comment No. 12: The Right to Adequate Food.

economically access adequate, nutritious, and safe food at all times.²⁰ While there exists a state ‘*obligation to fulfill*’, both in the obligation to *facilitate* and to *provide*, the latter is in the context of the state providing food assistance or ensuring social safety nets for individuals or groups who, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to enjoy this right by means at their disposal²¹. Under the obligation to fulfill, the Philippine state should not only (a) to strengthen or improve farmers’ equal enjoyment of the right to food through laws, policies and programs, but also (b) to provide assistance to farmers should they find themselves unable to feed themselves, and especially during times of crisis and disasters—typhoons, flooding, *el niño/la niña*, or other events that have been all too common in the archipelago.

In addition to the obligation to fulfill, the Philippines is also bound to fulfill the *obligation to respect* and the *obligation to protect* the right to food under the Covenant. The obligation to respect means the state should ensure that each Filipino’s current access to food and to their means of obtaining food is not affected one way or another. The State should guarantee that no law, policy or program contributes or leads to a diminished or unequal enjoyment of the right to food for everyone. The obligation to protect, on the other hand, means that the Philippine state should ensure that no third party—state or non-state, public or private, local-national or international, contributes to or actually violates the equal enjoyment of the right to food of anyone. Under this obligation the Philippine state should be mindful of its international legal obligation under the right to food whenever it enters and signs bilateral and multilateral agreements, like foreign borrowings/loans and trade.

There is also the ‘*progressive realization*’ of the right to food which imposes a state obligation “to move as expeditiously²² as possible towards that goal” and that “every State is obliged to ensure for everyone under its jurisdiction access to the minimum essential food which is sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe, to ensure their freedom from hunger” (CESCR, 1999). The State is the primary duty-bearer in the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to

²⁰ See OHCHR Fact Sheet No. 34 “The Right to Adequate Food,” at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/FactSheets.aspx> pp.3-4.

²¹ The same is invoked for victims of conflict and natural disasters.

²² Merriam-Webster defines ‘expeditious’ as “marked by or acting with prompt efficiency”. See <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>.

adequate food and the fundamental right to freedom from hunger. However, it is clear that the fulfillment of the right to food of Filipino farmers have not been as expeditiously realized compared to those in neighboring Asian countries (see Table 2 below). It can be argued that such a slow pace of rights realization is tantamount to a violation of state obligations vis-à-vis socio-economic-cultural rights. The Philippine state's fulfillment of the rights to food and to freedom from hunger has neither been expeditious nor consistent across the years resulting to a significant number and section of Filipinos still unable to equally enjoy said rights.

RANK IN 2013	COUNTRY	1990	1995	2000	2005	2013
6	China	13.0	10.4	8.4	6.7	5.5
9	Thailand	21.3	17.1	10.2	6.6	5.8
16	Vietnam	30.9	25.1	18.1	13.7	7.7
23	Indonesia	19.7	16.9	15.5	14.6	10.1
28	Philippines	19.9	17.4	17.7	14.0	13.2
47	Cambodia	32.2	30.7	27.8	20.9	16.8
54	Lao PDR	33.4	30.3	28.0	23.7	18.7
75	Timor-Leste	-	-	-	26.0	29.6

Table 2.2 The Philippines' Global Hunger Index Score relative to other Asian countries (von Grebmer et al., 2013).

Additionally, Paragraph 17 of General Comment No 12 stresses the elimination of “any discrimination in access to food, as well as to means and entitlements for its procurement, on the grounds of... national or social origin, property, birth or other status with the purpose of nullifying or impairing the equal enjoyment or exercise of economic, social and cultural rights constitutes a violation of the Covenant” (CESCR, 1999). While there is no *de jure* discrimination against the poor and the agricultural workers in the Philippines, it can be argued that there has been a longstanding *de facto* discrimination against them as demonstrated by official poverty and hunger statistics. As per the provisions of General Comment No. 12, this is clearly a case for the violation of the right to food.

The Fact Sheet on the Right to Adequate Food, published by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), paid attention to

vulnerable groups which included the rural poor. It noted that the poor cannot equally enjoy the right to food because of their inability to buy food or the means to grow food. But this inability to obtain food is a function of “persistent patterns of discrimination in access to education and information, political and social participation and access to justice” (OHCHR, 2010, p.10).

2.4.2 The PANTHER Human Rights Principles

Aside from the above norms and standards on the right to food, in 2006 the FAO also developed the PANTHER²³ Human Rights Principles. PANTHER is an acronym for **P**articipation, **A**ccountability, **N**on-Discrimination, **T**ransparency, **H**uman Dignity, **E**mpowerment, and **R**ule of Law. PANTHER itself is not a legally-binding framework however its principles are derived from the various treaties that make up the international human rights law. PANTHER is a “human rights-based approach to the right to food and food security” (FAO, 2017). The principles guide the decision-making and implementation processes particular to the right to food. *Participation* means that everyone – including Filipino farmers – has the right to be involved in the decisions that particularly affect them. *Accountability* means that elected and unelected government officials must be held accountable for their decisions and actions. *Non-discrimination* pertains to the right of everyone to be treated equally and the right of everyone – like the food insecure and those vulnerable to hunger – to equally enjoy the right to food. *Transparency* means that people have access to information, decisions, processes and outcomes. *Human Dignity* means that farmers, for example, are also human, therefore, they too deserve to be treated in a dignified manner. *Empowerment* means the ability of farmers, for example, to take control over decisions that affect them. *Rule of Law* means that all members of society, including government officials, should comply with the law, and that there legal recourse for the realization of the right to food. Some countries now have food sovereignty laws that uphold and protect the farmers’ right to food.

While the PANTHER Principles are not part of the legally-binding norms and standards on the right to food, they are used in this study as a set of parameters to

²³ See “Human Rights Principles: PANTHER” (FAO), at <http://www.fao.org/righttofood/about-right-to-food/human-right-principles-panther/en/> [Accessed 10 October 2014].

determine how compliant F.I.E.L.D.S. is with human rights principles which are essential to the realization of the right to food.

2.4.3 Philippine Legal and Policy Framework on the Right to Food

The second component of the FAO-commissioned *Philippines Right to Food Assessment* analyzed the 1987 Constitution and the various laws of the country and found the legal framework – in relation to fulfilling state obligations on the right to food – to be insufficient. De los Reyes and Diokno (2010) found that the current legal framework does not actually improve physical access to food particularly by those most vulnerable to food insecurity. The Philippines' legal framework has inadequately addressed the fundamental right to freedom from hunger. Some laws are compliant with core obligations but others are incompatible. Compliance, however, is subject to differences in the interpretation and implementation of the law. While the obligation to respect the right to food is not present in the legal framework, the obligation to protect is very much present. And while both obligations to fulfill—facilitate and provide are evident in the legal framework, the Assessment noted that the country's framework is “still insufficient to create the environment necessary to address hunger” (De los Reyes and Diokno 2010, p. 17).

The *Philippines Right to Food Assessment* also revealed that the current legal framework does not actually meet the provisions of the Voluntary Guidelines. The study also found that in terms of government spending, debt servicing was among those that took large parts of the annual government budget, while the right to food was among the least prioritized. The study also found that the Philippine Commission on Human Rights had done “very little—if at all” (De los Reyes and Diokno, 2010, p. 26) towards addressing hunger and violation of the right to food.

2.4.3.1 The 1987 Philippine Constitution

Despite what some have written about the constitutional recognition and protection of the right to food in the Philippines (Jonsen and Söllner, 2006, p.6), an assessment of the country's legal framework on the right to food found that “the [1987] Constitution does not explicitly recognize the right to food” (De los Reyes & Diokno, 2010, p.8). The only mention of “food” in the Constitution – under

Section 12, Article XIII – pertains to the government’s obligation of establishing and maintaining an “effective food and drug regulatory system” (1987 Constitution). However, the study looked at 15 provisions, analyzed each one of them relative to the records of the Constitutional Commission and to relevant jurisprudence, and found out that the right to food “may [only] be inferred from [the] various human rights provisions and from the constitutional intent to address mass poverty” (De los Reyes & Diokno, 2010, p.8).

De los Reyes and Diokno (2010) also pointed out that, in addition to the possibility of inferring the right to food in some provisions of the Constitution, a Supreme Court ruling²⁴ “weakens” said right (2010, p. 8). In *Tondo Medical Center Employees Association, et al. v. The Court of Appeals, et al* the Court ruled that constitutional provisions such as the right to health, education, work, and rights of the family, youth, workers, and persons with disabilities are “not judicially enforceable rights” (GR 167324) and that said provisions are “non- self-executing, and therefore, cannot give rise to a cause of action in the courts” (GR 167324).

On the question of the justiciability of economic and social rights, Desierto (2009) pointed to how the Supreme Court’s has not only characterized some socio-economic rights norms in the constitution as merely “aspirational” (GR 91649) and that the judiciary has had a tendency to reject constitutional scrutiny of said norms. Looking at the Supreme Court’s en banc judgment in *Brigido R. Simon et al. v. Commission on Human Rights, et al* Desierto also pointed to the “reticent” and “cautious” (2015) attitude of the Court towards the justiciability of socio-economic rights specified in the 1987 Constitution. All of this constitutes the thin jurisprudence and the weakness of the Supreme Court relative to the justiciability of socio-economic rights, even though the Constitution provides not only judicial review but also rule-making powers for the courts. Still it must be emphasized that neither the right to adequate food nor the right to freedom from hunger, nor the international norms and standards pertaining to them, are present in the 1987 Constitution which ultimately means that the Court cannot argue on the justiciability of said rights.

²⁴ G.R. Number 167324, 17 July 2007. *Tondo Medical Center Employees Association, et al. v. The Court of Appeals, et al.*

2.5 Food Security vs. Food Self-Sufficiency vs. Food Sovereignty

The concepts of food security, food self-sufficiency and food sovereignty are not part of international human rights law nor of the norms and standards on the right to food and yet they have been used by states and international organizations to argue for the effective solution to hunger and for the realization of the right to food. The UN asserts that the concepts of the right to food, food security, and food sovereignty are “different, although there is some overlap” (OHCHR, 2010, p. 4).

The World Bank, in its 1986 study on poverty and hunger, defined food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life” (World Bank, 1986, p. 1). Conversely, food insecurity is the “lack of access to enough food” (World Bank, 1986, p. 1). Then a decade later, at the 1996 World Food Summit, food security came to be popularly known as “a situation when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2001).

The Bank’s four major conclusions about food security are: (a) “the lack of food security is a lack of purchasing power of people and nations” (World Bank, 1986, p. 10) therefore the objectives of both poverty alleviation and the realization of food security are strongly related to each other; (b) “food security does not necessarily come from achieving food self-sufficiency nor from a rapid increase in food production” (World Bank, 1986, p. 10); (c) “food security in the long run is a matter of achieving economic growth and alleviating poverty” (World Bank, 1986, p. 10), though in the shorter run, food security means “achieving a redistribution of purchasing power and resources” (World Bank, 1986, p. 10); and (d) “transitory food insecurity linked to fluctuations in domestic harvests, international prices, and foreign exchange earnings can best be reduced through measures that facilitate trade and provide income relief to afflicted people” (World Bank, 1986, p. 11). The Bank suggested three ways how international donors can specifically help nations to achieve food security, such as (a) helping to identify and formulate the appropriate food security policies, (b) providing finance to support the policies, and (c) improving the external trading environment (World Bank, 1986, p. 11).

Scholars pointed out that in the 1990s there was a shift²⁵ towards a more global food regime involving “flexible systems of production, the corporate search for higher profits in new and multiple territories, and a new approach to international trade to permit a freer flow of goods across national borders” (Phillips, 2006, p. 39). Food-related transnational corporations (TNCs) and multilateral institutions—the World Bank, IMF, and the World Trade Organization (WTO)²⁶ were mainly the ones who shaped this new global food regime as part of the Neoliberal Agenda within the Washington Consensus. For Nally (2011) however, the shift happened earlier and coincided with the following: (a) “the liberalisation of the agrarian markets following the debt crisis in the 1970s” (Nally, 2011, p. 44); (b) “the acceleration and expansion in the uses of biotechnologies to control the production and reproduction of life” (Nally, 2011, p. 44); and (c) “the privatisation of nature through the extension of intellectual property rights to agriculture products” (Nally, 2011, p. 44).

The concept of food sovereignty is a reaction both to the shift towards a global food regime²⁷ and to the predominant neoliberal framing of food security. Food sovereignty is both a concept and a movement wherein “peoples define their own food and own model of food production (such as agriculture and fisheries), determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant and protect domestic food production and regulate trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives” (OHCHR, 2010, p. 4). As a movement-concept, food sovereignty supports the right to food and the idea that food is a human right instead of being a commodity. Unlike with food security, food sovereignty is highly invested on the question of where and how food is produced (Rosset, 2003). Food sovereignty is also not anti-trade, instead it advocates for “trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production” (Via Campesina, 2001, p.2). Food sovereignty

²⁵ For Nally (2011) the shift in agricultural production took place before the 1990s and is due to the following factors: (a) “the liberalisation of the agrarian markets following the debt crisis in the 1970s” (Nally, 2011, p. 44); (b) “the acceleration and expansion in the uses of biotechnologies to control the production and reproduction of life” (Nally, 2011, p. 44); and (c) “the privatisation of nature through the extension of intellectual property rights to agriculture products” (Nally, 2011, p. 44).

²⁶ The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is the precursor of the World Trade Organization.

²⁷ Edelman (2005) noted that *food sovereignty* as a concept was first raised as Via Campesina’s demand at the 1996 FAO Food Security Conference in Rome. However it was in 2001, and subsequent years, at various conferences and meetings that the concept was theoretically elaborated (Edelman, 2005, p. 339).

maintains that local production and access to land by peasants be prioritized, and that nations have the right not only to protect themselves from dumping but also to implement their own supply management policies (Edelman, 2005, p. 339).

On the other hand, food self sufficiency is “the extent to which a country can satisfy its food needs from its own domestic production” (FAO, 1999). Food self sufficiency is a development framework that places a premium on self-reliance, taking on an “auto-centric approach”, whereas food security takes on an international frame of development. The concept of food self-sufficiency gained prominence during the 2007-2008 food price crisis. Aside from the Philippines, countries like India, Senegal, Russia, Bolivia, Qatar took to a policy of food self-sufficiency. The usual debate around food self-sufficiency involves a clash between economic and political considerations—that countries prefer to rely on domestic production in order to preserve the state’s right to defend itself from the distortions of the global market. s one of economic clash with the political. Clapp (2017) argues, however, that the debate should be understood “in a more nuanced way, rather than as an either/or policy choice” (2017, p. 88). Looking at the debate on “relative terms”, food self-sufficiency is much more to do with “a country’s domestic capacity for food production than a rejection of food trade” (Clapp, 2017, p. 95).

2.5.1 The Philippine Food Security Framework

Food security, as used by government in the Philippines, usually means food self-sufficiency in general and self-sufficiency in rice in particular (Abrigo, 2004; Edralin and Collado, 2005, p. 5). The food security framework is established in the legal blueprint for Philippine agriculture which is Republic Act No. 8435 or the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 (hereinafter AFMA)²⁸. Under AFMA it is a declared policy of the State to “promote food security, including sufficiency in [the] staple food, namely rice and white corn” (RA 8435). Given ample

²⁸ Ten years after the passage of the CARL, the AFMA was signed into law by President Fidel Ramos. Aside from the aim of modernizing Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector, AFMA is a broad legislation for rural development. It is guided by seven principles, namely a) poverty alleviation and social equity, b) food security, c) rational use of resources, d) global competitiveness, e) sustainable development, f) people empowerment and g) protection from unfair competition. The law clearly specifies the State’s adoption of a market approach in assisting the agriculture and fisheries sectors. It also specifies the promotion of market-oriented policies in agricultural production in order to encourage farmers to shift to more profitable crops (RA 8435).

support by the state, production of the staple food shall be optimized to meet local consumption. Food security, as defined by the law, covers the *availability*, *adequacy* and *accessibility* of food to all at all times. The law's full definition of food security also entails the concept of sustainability—"meeting the food requirements of present and future generations" (RA 8435). The full definition also specifies importation, aside from local production of food, as means of attaining food security.

Assessment of the country's food security framework has been mixed. Some are supportive of the existing framework but noting there is too much bias towards the rice sector and that it badly needs reforms which include fully liberalizing trade in rice, and cutting the monopoly and downsizing the NFA which has been a source of corruption and political patronage (AGILE, 2000). Others argue that aside from giving too much attention to infrastructure, focus on "property rights and the means of production are equally crucial in food sufficiency and [in] increasing [the] incomes of farmers" (Royandoyan, 2016, p.49). Others stressed on how the Philippines continue to be a net food importer due to the existing policy. They noted that "the liberal attitude towards food policy produced a new definition of food security that emphasizes availability and affordability rather than prioritizing agricultural production" (Chavez, et al., 2012) and that "importation has become a strategy equal to production and no longer just a policy tool to address production shortfalls" (Chavez, et al., 2012).

2.6 Neoliberalism/Neoliberal Ideology

The existence of hunger in a country does not automatically translate to the violation of the right to food. It has to be proven that the state failed to fulfill its ICESCR obligations and that such failure has led to hunger. This study aims to establish the point that the inability of farmers to feed themselves in dignity, and the resulting violation of the right to food, can be attributed to the Philippine state's forced or free adoption of neoliberal ideology starting from the late 1970s/early 1980s up to

the present day.²⁹ The adoption of neoliberalism resulted in programs that, instead of supporting or enhancing the farmers ability to feed themselves in dignity, have actually

While there have been many definitions of what neoliberalism is, scholars have more or less identified its core elements and parameters. They agree that neoliberalism is constituted in the *Washington Consensus* which was crafted and implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank from the early 1980s till the 2000s.

This research, however, follows Harvey's (2005) description of neoliberalism as:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit" (Harvey, 2005, p.2).

²⁹ The next chapter provides some background on how the Philippines came to adopt neoliberal economic policies by looking at the history of select issues, laws, and programs that are relevant to agriculture and food security.

In addition to the above, other scholars have argued for the existence of a neoliberal morality. The concept of “neoliberal paternalism” (Soss, Fording and Schram, 2009) involves the state “managing” the poor – the government tells them what to do, disciplines them as if they are like children – all towards the goal of making them “better citizens” whereby they become self-reliant and self-caring instead of being dependent on the state. As good citizens, the poor are working and being productive agents of the economy. They are also obedient to the rules of the market and of authority. Under a “neoliberal paternalist” framework, social problems like poverty and hunger are also privatized. It is argued that individual problems can be solved through rational choices and actions within the confines of the market. Classical paternalism says that “the poor lack the competence needed to manage their own affairs” (Soss, Fording and Schram, 2009, p. 5). In order for the poor to live constructively, government needs to step in – like a fatherly authority figure – and provide some direction, guidance, and discipline for them. Under a neoliberal framework, the poor needs to be efficient and effective actors in the market. Soss, Fording and Schram (2009) argue that, more than being an American political project, neoliberal paternalism has risen as part of the global shift in governing the poor. They cite the Washington Consensus, the post-Washington Consensus, and the post post-Washington Consensus as all embodying this neoliberal paternalism. In the Philippines, the Macapagal-Arroyo administration’s poverty program—KALAHI-CIDSS, the Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program (AHMP), and the F.I.E.L.D.S. Rice Self-Sufficiency Program can be considered as reflecting aspects of neoliberal paternalism.

What then is the implication of neoliberalism or neoliberal ideology to the solution to hunger and to the fulfillment of the human right to food? Chen and Churchill (2005) point to the “paradox of human rights” wherein state leaders leaning towards neoliberalism assert that economic well-being and security, market integration, and free trade are prerequisites for the development and attainment of human rights (Chen and Churchill, 2005). The creation of greater prosperity and the expansion of economic opportunities is said to ultimately lead to social justice and the realization of human potential. The state’s central role then revolves around (a) protecting the current order and thinking, (b) stabilizing and sustaining the economy,

and (c) using its power and force to protect “market rights” (Johnson and Start 2001, p. 22)—the right to private property and the maintenance of the supposed efficacy of the market. The state becomes the “guarantor or referee of *market rights*” (Johnson and Start, 2001, p. 22).

2.6.1 Neoliberal Food Regime

Table 2.3 Corporate Food Regime vs. Food Movements (Holt- Giménez, 2010)

	CORPORATE FOOD REGIME		FOOD MOVEMENTS	
Politics	<i>Neoliberal</i>	<i>Reformists</i>	<i>Progressive</i>	<i>Radical</i>
Discourse	Food Enterprise	Food Security	Food Justice	Food Sovereignty
Main Institutions	IFC-World Bank; IMF; WTO; Heritage Foundation; Chicago Global Council; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Feed the Future Campaign	IBRD-World Bank; FAO; UN Commission on Sustainable Development; mainstream fair trade; some Slow Food Movement; some Food Policy Councils; most food banks and food aid programs	Alternative fair trade and many Slow Food chapters; many organizations in the Community Food Security Movement; many farmworker and labor organizations	Via Campesina; International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty; Global March for Women; many food justice and rights-based movements
Orientation	<i>Corporate</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Empowerment</i>	<i>Entitlement</i>
Model	Overproduction; corporate concentration; unregulated markets and monopolies; monocultures (including organic); GMOs; agrofuels; mass global consumption of industrial food; phasing out of peasant and family agriculture and local retail	Mainstreaming / certification of nice markets (e.g. organic, fair, local, sustainable); maintaining agricultural subsidies; “sustainable” roundtables for agrofuels, soy, forest products, etc.; market-led land reform	Agroecologically produced local food; investment in underserved communities; new business models and community benefit packages for production, processing, and retail; better wages for agricultural workers; solidarity economies; land and food access	Dismantle corporate agrifoods monopoly power; parity; redistributive land reform; community rights to water and seed; regionally based food systems; democratization of food system; sustainable livelihoods; protection from dumping / overproduction; revival of agroecologically managed peasant agriculture to distribute wealth and cool the planet; regulated markets and supply

Table 2.3 Corporate Food Regime vs. Food Movements (cont.)

	CORPORATE FOOD REGIME	FOOD MOVEMENTS		CORPORATE FOOD REGIME
Approach to the (2007-2010) food crisis	Increased industrial production; unregulated corporate monopolies; land grabs; expansion of GMOs; public-private partnership; liberal markets; international sourced food aid	Same as neoliberal but with increased medium farmer production and some locally sourced food aid; more agricultural aid but tied to GMOs and “bio-fortified / climate-resistant” crops	Right to food; better safety nets; sustainably produced, locally-sourced food; agroecologically based agricultural development	Human right to food sovereignty; locally sourced, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate democratically controlled focus on UN/FAO negotiations
Guiding Document	World Bank 2009 Development Report	World Bank 2009 Development Report	International Assessment on Agriculture Science Technology and Development	People’s Comprehensive Framework for Action to Eradicate Hunger

With the predominance of neoliberal ideology, there has also been a global restructuring of food production and systems through what is called a corporate food regime (Holt-Giménez, 2010) or a neoliberal food regime (Sodano, 2012). In the existing corporate food regime there is “monopoly market power and mega-profits of agrifood corporations³⁰, global meat production, and growing links between food and fuel” (Holt-Giménez, 2010). Additionally, multinational and transnational corporations have also become more powerful than governments or multilateral organizations resulting to a three-way “political-economic partnership” (Holt-Giménez, 2010) with corporations having an impact or important say on a range of issues including trade³¹, labor³², property, and technology³³.

³⁰ The global agrifood industrial complex comprises of monopolies such as the genetic engineering company Monsanto, grain-trading giants Archer Daniel Midlands (ADM) and Cargill, as well as transnational food retailers Tesco (British-owned), Walmart (American-owned), and Carrefour (French-owned). Large agro-industrial firms like the Singapore-based Wilmar International and Thai multinational Charoen Phokphand Foods (CP) are also part of this global food regime.

³¹ International trade liberalization is one of the essential components of neoliberal economic globalization.

³² Under a neoliberal food regime, there is “an international division of labor based on the organizational features of global food commodity chains” (Garnett, 2008; Shiva, 2008, cited in Sodano, 2012, p. 377).

³³ The new areas for extracting profit are in bio-nano technologies and intellectual property rights. Monsanto has been at the forefront of developing genetically-modified seeds. In the Philippines, big multinational companies like Monsanto, Bayer, and Syngenta, as well as local companies like SL Agritech Corporation are in the business of manufacturing and selling hybrid rice varieties to Filipinos. In 1998, the Ramos administration launched the use of hybrid rice technology as a national

Critics of neoliberalism have pointed out to the numerous negative impacts and effects of the ideology not just to food, agriculture, and hunger, but also to human rights in general. One asserted that neoliberal ideology is “at the root of all our problems” (Monbiot, 2016) while others demonstrated how ‘free trade’ is responsible for the continued destruction of Third World agriculture (Bello, 2009) and the rice crisis phenomenon in the Philippines. For others still, neoliberalism and the neoliberal food regime are responsible for a longer-term world food crisis which is related to the global food price crisis of 2008.

Neoliberalism has advocated for a restructuring of agriculture along the ‘free market’ argument that says the market is most efficient at responding (supplying) to human needs (demands) therefore the market should be free from distortions and has limited state interventions. In contrast to *laissez faire* or classical liberal economics which says the market should be free from state intervention, within the neoliberal frame of the ‘free market’ the state still has an important role which is mainly that of supporting the market become more efficient and effective at what it supposedly does best. The political – the state and its policies – must then align and support the paramount goals of the economic – the market and the economy. The fundamentalism embedded in the neoliberal framework is that every aspect of human and non-human life is restructured along economic and market analogies and processes. This means then that questions on poverty, human rights, or the right to food, for example, are not addressed partly along political arguments but solely through economic ones. Hunger as an issue, therefore, is considered not as a result of inequality, marginalization, or the violation of human rights, but rather a function of an ineffective and inefficient market where supply does not match demand or there is a disruption or distortion in the availability and affordability of food in the market for consumers.

Under a neoliberal framework, the government’s supposed focus is not just to ensure that farmers become efficient producers and effective actors/players in the market (consumers), but that the market is also well-functioning, and that trade

development strategy, whereas in 2002, the Macapagal-Arroyo administration launched the Hybrid Rice Commercialization Project (HRCP) as part of the government’s rice self-sufficiency strategy. The use of “high-quality” rice seeds – manufactured by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) – is one of the key interventions identified in the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program.

supports the economic and food security goals of the state. Food security, however, can be attained through the market. A food policy influenced by a neoliberal framework, therefore, would naturally consider food as a commodity and not as a human right. Food is managed both on the supply side—increased production and improved productivity, and on the demand side—making food available and acceptable for consumers. Food as a commodity, instead of as human right, would also mean that only those who have money or income to buy food can avail of it. Therefore, with regards to the poor and the vulnerable to food insecurity (i.e. farmers), the government’s policy and intervention for them would revolve around integrating them into the economy and the market as workers/producers and consumers. Under a neoliberal framework, the poor and the hungry need work and income so they can access food (buy) that is available in the market.

2.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study

This research aims to understand how the government – through F.I.E.L.D.S., as a state food production program – views poverty, hunger, and the right to food of Filipino farmers, and how much influence neoliberalism or neoliberal ideology has had on its framework. This will be accomplished using two lenses of analysis: a) the international norms and standards on the right to food, and b) the ideology of neoliberalism.

Table 2.4 Framework of the Research Problem

F.I.E.L.D.S. Program’s Framework on Hunger	Normative/Core Content on the Right to Food	PANTHER Human Rights Principles Most Relevant for Programme Assessment (FAO)
General Framework on the Problem of Hunger in the Philippines	Economic and physical access to food	Participation,
General Framework on the Solution to Hunger in the Philippines	Food availability	Accountability,
Specific Framework on the Problem of Hunger of Farmers	Food adequacy	Non-Discrimination,
Specific Framework on the Solution to the Hunger of Farmers	State Obligations arising from the Right to Adequate Food and Fundamental Right to Freedom from Hunger	Transparency,
		Human Dignity,
		Empowerment,
		Rule of Law

De Schutter suggested that the right to food actually “provides a signpost” (2009, p. 13) and fulfills several things. First, it compels us to look at the plight of the most vulnerable to hunger and to food insecurity. Secondly, the right invokes the human rights principles of participation and accountability. It also makes one ask questions that are political and not just technical. The right to food enriches our understanding of both the problem and solution to hunger. Lastly, the right to food provides a better analysis of our mistakes and how we can eradicate the “injustice of hunger” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 13). Guided by these, the primary lens of analysis of the research involves the norms and standards on the right to adequate food and the fundamental right to freedom from hunger. The research will also use the FAO-developed P.A.N.T.H.E.R. Principles which are basically the key human rights principles.

The second lens of analysis involves the ideology of neoliberalism. It is argued here that the consistent and historical poverty and hunger – and by extension the violation of the right to food – of farmers in Philippines is tied to both the imposition and (later) the adoption of neoliberalism/neoliberal ideology which was embedded in the economic policies that came as conditionalities of loans from international financial institutions starting from the Marcos administration up to the present. The Philippine state – especially through the governments of the EDSA Republic – was either forced to adopt or voluntarily embraced the economic fundamentalist thinking of the market’s primacy in human relations and its role in addressing poverty, hunger, and other basic needs. Since the 1970s the Philippine government has prioritized external borrowings and debt servicing over the allocation of limited resources to basic services including agriculture. The miserable state of Philippine agriculture and the high incidence of poverty and hunger in the rural areas and among farmers is a result of the government’s adoption of wrong priorities and policies. Using the language of Sen (1981) and De Schutter (2009), it is argued here that the diminished ability of Filipino farmers to command access to food is part of (a) the shifts and distortions in *entitlements*, and (b) the historical robbery of their livelihoods, which, overall, can be attributed to the government’s adoption of neoliberalism as an ideology. The story of poverty, hunger and violation of the right to

food of Filipino farmers is tied to the story of the Philippines state/government's adoption of neoliberalism.

CHAPTER III

PHILIPPINE LAWS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS RELEVANT TO AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief historical background and context of key policies/laws relevant to agriculture and food security in the Philippines from the 1970s to the present. By drawing on the history and evolution of certain government policies, this chapter not only aims to explain how the country's current framework around food security, poverty, and hunger came to be established, but also to draw the connection between those policies and laws and the Philippine Rice Self-Sufficiency Master Plan and the F.I.E.L.D.S. interventions.

The chapter will first discuss the evolution of agrarian and land reform policy and programs. There will be a discussion on the Marcos Masagana 99 Rice Production program which is said to be the inspiration, if not the replica of Macapagal-Arroyo's F.I.E.L.D.S. Program. A discussion of the human rights and social justice provisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution will follow. There will also be a discussion on the government's debt and borrowings policy, the impact of neoliberal economic programs imposed by international financial institutions, as well as the impact of trade liberalization and the country's membership to the World Trade Organization. Finally, this chapter shall also discuss some of the country's main laws and program pertaining to agriculture and hunger.

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the negative impacts and consequences of (the adoption of) neoliberal economic policies on (a) the ability of the Philippine state to promote, protect, and fulfill human rights, and (b) on the ability of farmers to feed themselves and their families in dignity.

3.2 Agrarian/Land Reform¹ in the Philippines

In 2002, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food stressed on the value and importance of access to land in the struggle for eradicating world hunger, and noted that the policy agrarian reform – of which access to land is a fundamental component – “must play a key part in countries’ food security strategies” (UNGA, 2002, p.8). The report asserted that just like poverty, hunger is still a predominantly rural problem, and that it is a product of either landlessness, unsecure tenure, or of not having a big property sufficient to grow the necessary food to feed one’s family. Citing evidence from over 60 countries that had undertaken land reforms post-World War II, the report identified three factors for the effectivity of land reforms, namely: a) the “genuinely transformative and genuinely redistributive” nature of the reforms, b) the allocation of quality land to the poor, and c) the breakdown of rural power structures (UNGA, 2002, p.9). A viable, genuinely transformative and distributive agrarian reform involves not only land but also support for access to other factors such as water, credit, transportation, extension services and other infrastructure. The report also emphasized the need to recognize and guarantee women’s right to access to land and to water given the key food security role they play in the household and in crop production. The respect and protection of the rights of women is essential to the full realization of the right to food, the report asserted.

A decade before the UN raised the importance of a genuinely transformative and distributive agrarian reform Filipino economists have already acknowledged that a land reform program’s effectivity depends on the speed and coverage of its implementation as well as on the accompanying development policies within and outside agriculture (Balisacan, 1990 as cited in Pabuayon et al., 2013, p.111). While it is clear that agrarian/land reform has not resulted to significant change in the lives of Filipino farmers and agricultural workers, a brief discussion of the history of agrarian/land reform as well as the relevant laws is necessary in order to establish the inadequacies of land reform in the Philippines.

¹ In the context of the Philippines, agrarian reform and land reform are used here interchangeably. Pabuayon et al (2013) defines land reform as “a policy that creates equitable access to land” (2013, p.110) whereas agrarian reform is a broader policy covering “all aspects of the progress of rural institutions, and changes in three structures, namely; (a) tenure, (b) production, and (c) support services” (2013, p.110).

The 2002 UN Report highlighted the close link between rural poverty and extreme inequality in access to land (IFAD, 2001 as cited in UNGA, 2002, p.8). It also raised the historical and colonial aspect of land ownership, and noted that the historical inequality has persisted in the present due to the landholding elites' "resistance" to redistribution and agrarian reform programmes (UNGA, 2002, p.8). This account is not far off from the general story of land ownership and of attempts at land redistribution and reform in the Philippines which for 330 years was a colony of Spain and for nearly 47 years a colony of the US.²

Similar to other Spanish colonies, the Philippine archipelago was subject to the feudal political system of *encomienda*³ wherein the Crown granted huge tracts of land or haciendas to all those who helped subjugate the natives including friars (and their different dioceses/orders), and native nobles. Albeit some modification, and even after American Colonial rule, such a system persisted in the Philippines wherein land ownership was concentrated in the hands of the politico-economic elite few, and tillers or tenants make up majority of farm labour and rural population (Pabuayon, 2013, p.112). As noted in Pabuayon et al (2013), the First Philippine Republic "tried to confiscate large landed estates" (2013, p.112) of the church but the incoming American rule prevented this from producing significant impacts.

During American Colonial rule, laws pertaining to the regulation and improvement of land tenure were passed. The 1902 Philippine Organic Act provided for a bill of rights for the Filipinos and the disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church as the state religion.⁴ The Organic Act resulted in the government buying friars estates amounting to 166,000 hectares, and selling them to Filipinos some of which were tenants but majority were estate owners (Seekins, 1993). The 1902 Land Act set the limit of land to be sold or leased to American individuals and American corporations. In 1933, the Share Tenancy Act of 1933 sought to resolve the tenancy problem by regulating the relationship between landowners and tenants, establishing

² See Agoncillo, T., 1990. *History of the Filipino People* (8th ed.), University of the Philippines. See also Constantino, R., 1975. *The Philippine: A Past Revisited*. Quezon City: Tala Publishing Services.

³ The *encomendero* was allowed to collect tributes from the inhabitants of the hacienda while ensuring the latter's protection and the administration of justice and governance.

⁴ See Seekins, D.M., 1993. The First Phase of United States Rule, 1898-1935, in Dolan, R.E. *Philippines: A Country Study* (4th ed.), Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Available at: <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-10385.html> [Accessed on 20 September 2015].

standards such as a 50-50 sharing of crops, 10 percent interest rate per agricultural year, and safeguards against arbitrary dismissal by the landlord. The Act had loopholes however and was amended but agrarian problems persisted. During the Commonwealth period, other laws such as Republic Act No. 1160 – or the establishment of the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration and Republic Act No. 1199 of 1954 – which sought to improve further the share tenancy system; to introduce leasehold; and to strengthen the tenants’ security of tenure (Pabuayon, 2013, p.113). Inequities in land distribution, however, prevailed, despite the enactment of the aforementioned laws.

3.2.1 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law

After the Marcos Dictatorship was removed, the agrarian/land reform program of the government was the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (hereinafter CARP) which derived legal bases from the 1987 Constitution and later from Republic Act No. 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (hereinafter CARL). As stated under Section 21 Article II of the 1987 Constitution, “The State shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform.” In 1988, CARP – through CARL – was touted as the Corazon Aquino administration’s centerpiece program on social justice, rural development and industrialization. CARP was not just for farmer-tenants and those who worked on the land but also for the landless poor. In 1998, the year CARP was supposed to be completed, Republic Act No. 8532 was enacted to strengthen the program until 2008 by providing for augmentation fund sourced mostly from the sale of assets (through the Assets Privatization Trust) and of Marcos ill-gotten wealth recovered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government. In 2009, CARPER or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms was enacted not only to extend for another five years CARP’s deadline of land distribution but also to amend certain CARP provisions. In 2014, CARP expired as Congress failed to approve the Benigno Aquino administration’s proposal of extending the program for another two years (Cervantes, 2014).

The program’s initial target was to redistribute around 10.3 million hectares of public and private agricultural lands to four million farmers and farm workers (Borras Jr., et al., 2007, p. 1559). Manahan (2008) noted however that

throughout the 20 years of CARP's life, the government's land acquisition and distribution (LAD) targets and scope of accomplishments shifted. As indicated in the website of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), 7.8 million hectares was CARP's estimated coverage (DAR, undated).

Table 3.1 CARP's Shifting LAD Targets and Accomplishments in 2007 (Manahan, 2008)

	Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)	Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)	CARP Total
Original Scope 1988-1994	3.8 m ha	6.3 m ha	10.1 m ha
Revised Scope 1997	4.3 m ha	3.8 m ha	8.1 m ha
Inventory of CARP's Scope 2006	5.1 m ha	3.8 m ha	8.9 m ha
June 2007	5.16 m ha	3.84 m ha	9.0 m ha
LAD Accomplishment	3.96 m ha	3.05 m ha	6.91 m ha
% Accomplishment	76.7	79.4	84.5 m ha
Beneficiaries Accomplishment	2.3 m ha	1.99 m ha	4.29 m ha
Balance	1.2 m ha	.79 m ha	1.99 m ha

Aside from LAD, the CARP had other voluntary non-expropriatory land acquisition options, one of which is the voluntary land transfer (VLT) wherein peasants are allowed to directly transfer and purchase lands. As noted in Borrás Jr., et al (2007) noted that “the elite used VLT in various ways for anti-reform purposes, the most common of which was to subdivide lands to family members and declare such act as in compliance with the law” (p.1561). In 2004, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) broke a story exposing CARP's loopholes—evasion of landowners and an agrarian bureaucracy that was not only beholden to landowners but also were careless with the implementation of the program. PCIJ's two-part story exposed how the de Leon clan, through the VLT option, sold the 212-hectare to 77 “farmer-beneficiaries” who are in fact members of the clan, including a 10-year old student in Canada (Rimban, 2004a, 2004b). From the perspective of power distribution, Borrás Jr. (2006) pointed to the inherent contradiction between ‘land

redistribution' and 'voluntary policy' because in the Philippines, the "VLT transactions have demonstrated faked land redistribution involving "on-paper sales," "on-paper beneficiaries," and peasants who were coerced to "voluntarily" agree to a landlord's evasive scheme" (Borras Jr., 2005; Franco, 2005, as cited in Borras, Jr. 2006, p.115).

Pabuayon et al noted that there were "financing and implementation difficulties" (2013, p.120) during the initial ten years of CARP. Borras Jr., et al pointed to the program's miserable outcome in the first six years as "the CARP process was dominated by anti-reform policy" and "marked by nepotism, corruption and repression, and the non-participation of rural social movements" (2007, p.1559). Overall, Bello et al (2014) pointed to the "very slow pace of agrarian reform" (p.14), the "uneven" progress of land distribution, and the fact that CARP did not get full government support and adequate financing, nor did the program actually give farmers and workers definitive legal ownership and effective support services. In 2008, Manahan had already argued that "CARP fails to fulfill its Constitutional mandate to promote social justice and development due to contradictory policies" (2008). The liberalization of agriculture and entry of cheap products from other countries, as well as the prioritization of agribusiness by the Department of Agriculture, left agrarian reform beneficiaries more vulnerable as there was not only insufficient support services but also limited fund for the Department of Agriculture to help make them competitive.

In order to resolve the agrarian reform problem, FDC suggested for its "reclamation" (2008c, p.15). The root of the problem in the country is that the state has relegated its responsibility to the private sector and foreign creditors. To address this, FDC suggested, the government must move away from looking at agriculture as an "export industry" and locate agrarian reform within an industrialization-development strategy. FDC echoes the following specific calls of progressive peasant groups (2008c, pp.15-16):

a) the government's formulation of a "long-term agri-industrialization strategy which puts at its core the completion of a socially just agrarian reform, and equitable, optimal, and continuing access to rural credit and productive resources";

- b) the government's mobilization of "internal funds towards full and focused compliance with the existing Presidential Decree 717... also known as the Agri-Agra Law, before it looks for other external sources of financing such as loans and ODA";
- c) the executive and legislature's role in strengthening of all agencies and institutions involved in agricultural and rural development and other peripheral agencies via increased budgetary allocation and more effective auditing and evaluation.

3.2.2 Market-led Agrarian Reform (MLAR)

As established in literature, it is often the case that many farmers and agricultural workers do not own the land they are cultivating and are instead bound by profit-sharing schemes with landowners. From an economist's perspective, this situation is not only disadvantageous for the tenant—the farmer-agricultural worker, but it also sustains rural poverty (Pabuayon, et al., 2013, 108). It is argued that, as opposed to the landowner-operator, the tenant lacks all the incentive to improve land productivity because profit will be shared with the land owner.

In addition to the above, economists nowadays not only assert that land is a "factor of production" (Pabuayon, et al., 2013, p.107), a natural resource necessary for production, but they also acknowledge, or at least espouse, the idea that "access to productive land is an essential prerequisite for the realization of a range of human rights, including access to food, livelihood, and shelter" (Stiglitz, 2009, p.9, as cited in Tapscott, 2012, p.30). Economists now contend the broad objectives of agrarian or land reform namely, a) the political – the empowerment of farmers and their ability to take part in the decision-making process affecting their lives and livelihood, b) the economic – the improvement of farm productivity and farmers incomes, and the reduction of poverty, and c) the social – the achievement of equity based on the farmer's right to own the land they cultivate (Pabuayon, et al., 2013, p.120).

The two positions above – improving land productivity and reducing poverty – are now part of the World Bank's interest in land reform. However, as opposed to state-led land/agrarian reform, they advocate for a market-assisted land reform (MALR) or market-led agrarian reform (MLAR). As discussed by Deininger and Binswanger (1999), the World Bank's "Land Reform Policy Paper" in 1975 had three guiding principles namely, "the desirability of owner-operated family farms, the

need for markets to permit land to be transferred to more productive users; and the importance of an egalitarian asset distribution” (1999, p.247). The main contention over land reform involves the need for efficient land use which will supposedly lead to productivity and ultimately to poverty reduction. Deininger and Binswanger argue the need for “improving the way land markets function and using these markets to complement government efforts to redistribute agricultural land” (1999, p.266). There ought to be a “land reform that is less detrimental to the functioning of markets” (1999, p.267). They claim that that several countries, including the Philippines, have been experimenting with a “community-based” land reform, and such approach has provided many advantages such as the a) creation of incentives both for beneficiaries and landowners, b) the replacement of confrontation with collaboration between landowner and beneficiary, c) the stimulation of land markets instead of their weakening, and d) the improvement of information with the greater involvement of the private sector instead of the imperfections (i.e., inefficiency, corruption) brought by government bureaucracy.

3.2.2.1 Community Managed Agrarian Reform and Poverty Reduction Program (CMARPRP)

The Community Managed Agrarian Reform and Poverty Reduction Program (CMARPRP) was a project implemented from 2003 to 2007 and funded by the World Bank-affiliate Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF). One of CMARPRP’s “major activity was land distribution, using DAR’s voluntary land transfer (VLT) scheme” (World Bank, 2009, p.226) but it also provided support services for raising farm productivity. The project covered a total of 10 sites with an original target of 1,000 hectares. It also involved 10 agrarian reform communities with a total population of 53,000. There were a total actual number of 656 agrarian reform beneficiaries involving 68 landowners (World Bank, 2009).

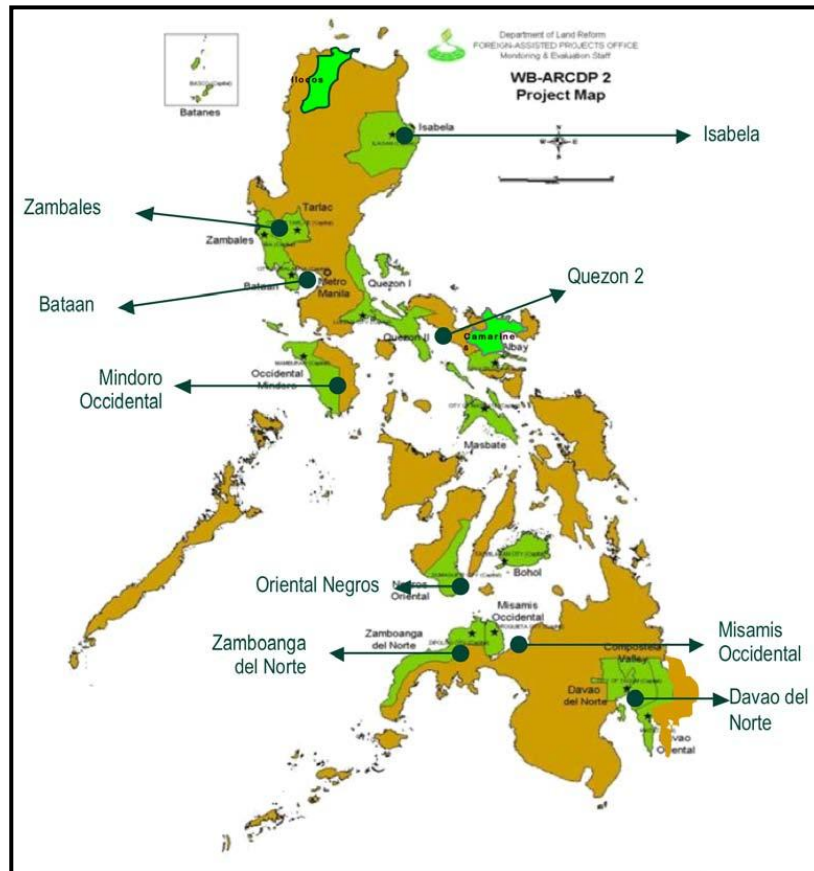


Figure 3.2 Location of CMARPRP Sites (World Bank, 2009, p.228)

Citing a World Bank report⁵, Borras Jr., et al pointed out that the first attempt of the Bank at recruiting the government to the MLAR model was in 1995. While the report claimed that “it is time to revisit how to accomplish the goals of rural land reform so that the intended beneficiaries—the poorest of farmers and landless agricultural workers—can benefit” (World Bank, 1995, p. 71), it also suggested that “tenancy should be allowed once again, as a useful interim state between landless labor and owner-cultivator status” (World Bank, 1995, p. 71), and that “a market assisted land reform should be studied to explore options for reducing costs” (World Bank, 1995, p. 71).

Borras Jr., et al revealed of the “anti-poor outcomes” of the World Bank experiment that is CMARPRP, demonstrating that wealth and power transferred only to the elites—“intra-elite/elite-to-elite, state-to-elite, foreign donor-to-elite, and poor-to-elite” (2007, p.1557). Field visits and interviews in Quezon,

⁵ See World Bank, 1995. A Strategy to Fight Poverty: Philippines. pp.69-79.

Mindoro, Bataan, Zambales, and Davao also revealed “questionable ownership, questionable sellers” (Borras Jr., et al, 2007, pp.1570-1571), “questionable buyers, questionable beneficiaries” (Borras Jr., et al, 2007, p.1571) “questionable land transfers, questionable development projects” (Borras Jr., et al, 2007, p.1571), and “questionable intentions, questionable interventions” (Borras Jr., et al, 2007, p.1572). Borras Jr, et al argued that the World Bank experiment brought not just benefits and support to those who are against land reform, but it also undermined the redistributive potentials of then and future state land reform law in the Philippines.

3.3 Debt and Neoliberal Economic Policies, and their Impact on Agriculture and the Right to Food

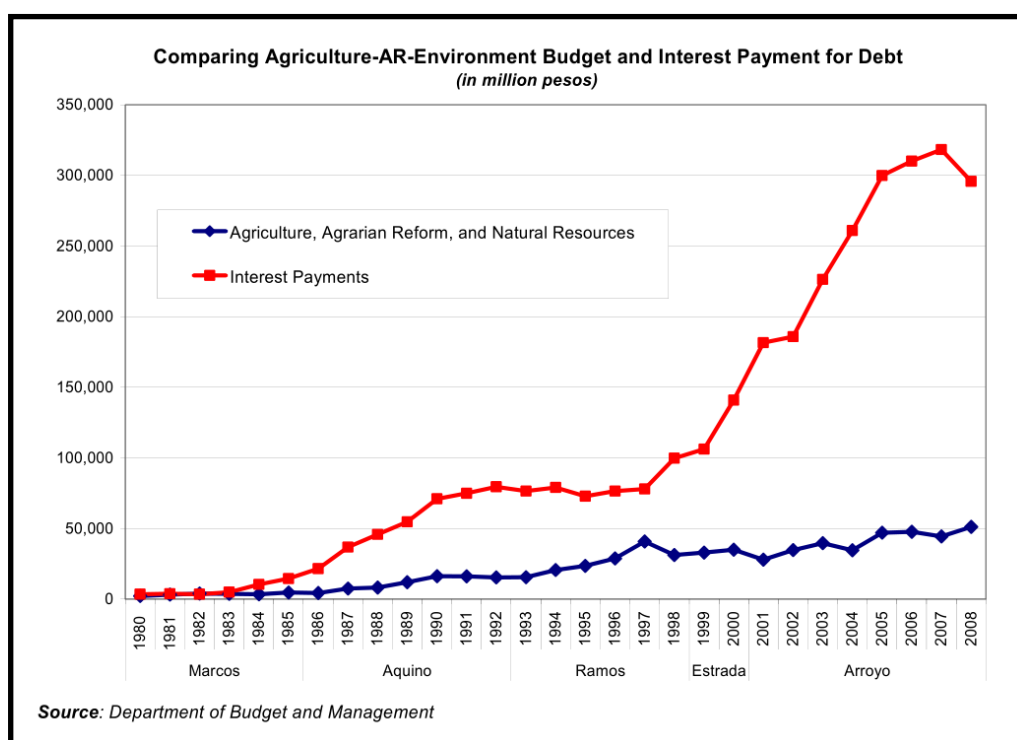


Figure 3.3 Philippine Government Budget for Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, and Natural Resources vs. Budget for Debt Interest Payment, 1980-2008 (FDC, 2008c)

A discussion of the Philippines’ foreign debt, its history of borrowings from international financial institutions (IFIs), the Automatic Appropriations Law (hereinafter AAL), and the country’s experience of the impact of neoliberal economic

policies is warranted. Bello et al (2014) characterized the situation as “anti-agriculture state” (p.106) as agriculture was not only neglected, but also not under-invested. They argued that “agriculture was the sacrificial lamb of the rise of the neoliberal policymaking orthodoxy” (Bello et al., 2014, pp.106-107). The problem with Philippine agriculture is not simply that the government spent and invested poorly in the sector but that it acquiesced to structural adjustment programs and prioritized the debt and debt servicing over other items.

The Philippines has several laws relevant to borrowings and foreign debt (FDC, 2008b). Republic Act No. 4860 or the Foreign Borrowings Act gives the President permission to acquire foreign loans for economic development and to guarantee foreign loans and/or bonds incurred by government owned and controlled corporations. Section 20, Article VII of the 1987 Constitution authorizes the President to contract or guarantee foreign loans on behalf of the Republic with the prior agreement of the Monetary Board, and subject to limitation that may be provided by law. Additionally, Section 21, Article XII of the Constitution not only ensures acquisition of foreign loans through monetary authority, it also gives primary importance in the public’s access to information about the loans acquired. Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Circular No. 1389 dated 13 April 1993, as amended (Part II, Chapter I) states that foreign borrowings of the public sector, except short term Foreign Currency Deposit Units (FCDU) need BSP approval. Republic Act No. 7718 or the Philippine Build-Operate-Transfer Law allows the private sector to finance, construct, operate and maintain priority projects included in development programs of all concerned government agencies. Republic Act No. 8555 and Republic Act 8182 or the Official Development Assistance Act and its amendment spells out not only the financing of projects that promote economic development and welfare of developing countries, but also the exclusion of official development assistance (ODA) from the foreign debt limit. However, the most damaging of these debt and borrowings laws is the Marcos legacy Presidential Decree 1177 (hereinafter PD 1177) which stipulates debt servicing as the government’s priority.

In 1972 Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law and by 1973, through a constitutional plebiscite, a new constitution replaced the 1935 Constitution and the system of government changed from presidential to parliamentary with Marcos as both

head of state and head of government. As part of his 'New Society' framework, and in order to have full control of the government's budgetary process, Marcos promulgated PD 1177 also known as Budget Reform Decree of 1977. The decree not only gave the President "the authority to transfer any fund appropriated for the different departments, bureaus, offices and agencies of the Executive Department" (Section 44, PD 1177), but it also lumped and provided automatic appropriations for "personnel retirement premiums, government service insurance, and other similar fixed expenditures, principal and interest on public debt, and national government guarantees of obligations" (Section 31, PD 1177). In 1965, when Marcos was first elected into the presidency, the Philippines' total external debt was USD 600 million of which USD 359 million was public debt (Philippine External Debt, 1956-1970, Central Bank, Management of External Debt and Investment Accounts Division, undated, cited in Dohner and Intal, 1989a, p. 383 as Table 1.2). In 1970, total external debt had ballooned to USD 2.297 billion, and by 1974 it became USD 3.755 billion. After four years, the external debt totaled USD 10.694 billion with the debt-as-percentage of GDP growing to 44.5% in 1978 from 25.5% in 1974. By 1986, the year of the Dictator's removal from office, the country's external debt totaled USD 28.256 billion.

Corazon C. Aquino was installed to power following the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution but instead of making a new start by refusing to honor illegitimate debts incurred under the Dictatorship, her administration chose to pronounce an 'honor-all-debt' policy at the joint session of US Congress in 1986. In signing Executive Order 292 (EO 292)⁶, Aquino chose to continue the Marcosian debt servicing policy as prescribed under Presidential Decree 1177 (PD 1177).

As noted by Freedom from Debt Coalition (hereinafter FDC), "the largest of automatically appropriated funds go to debt servicing for interest payment and principal amortization" which has then "dwarfed allocations for social spending for education, health, agriculture, and the environment" (FDC, 2007, p.1). At the time Marcos was removed from Malacañang Palace, the Philippine foreign debt was around

⁶ Section 26 Automatic Appropriations, under Book VI, Chapter 4 Budget Authorization of Executive Order 292 was copied *in toto* from Section 31 of Presidential Decree No. 1177 (Revising the budget process in order to institutionalize the budgetary innovations of the New Society), signed by Ferdinand Marcos on 30 July 1977.

USD 28 billion but it had grown to USD 42 billion by the end of Corazon Aquino's term (FDC, 2006). In 2003, under the Macapagal-Arroyo Administration, the foreign debt peaked at USD 57.6 billion, but in 2016, near the end of Benigno S. Aquino III's term, the country's foreign debt stood at around USD 70 billion.⁷

In terms of borrowings per administration, FDC pointed out that the combined Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos, and Joseph Estrada governments contracted a total of PHP 1.7 trillion in debt, however, just six years in office (from 2001 to 2007), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had earned for her administration the record of "the single biggest borrower among the post-EDSA presidents" (Pabico, 2008) having borrowed a total of PHP 3.54 trillion. However, this record has now been broken by the succeeding administration of Benigno S. Aquino III. As reported in early 2016, during Aquino III's term, the government borrowed PHP 4.6 trillion, with the national outstanding debt hitting PHP 6.4 trillion.

In addition to the various laws on borrowings and debt, policy recommendations of IFIs—the International Monetary Fund (hereinafter IMF) and the World Bank, as well as the rules and agreements in the World Trade Organization (hereinafter WTO) have negatively impacted on and constrained the agency not only of the Philippines in general but also of its citizens with regards to fulfilling and enjoying socio-economic rights especially the right to food. The Philippines' experience of foreign debt and the imposition of loan-attached conditionalities such as neoliberal⁸ economic policies—'Structural Adjustment Programs' (hereinafter SAPs), 'poverty reduction strategies', and in recent times 'sustainable and inclusive growth strategies' of the IMF and the World Bank, as well as the country's experience of the

⁷ In February 2016, FDC sounded the call to make the repeal of the Automatic Appropriations Law an electoral issue by pointing out the PHP 6.6 trillion national debt (or roughly PHP 62,000 owed by every Filipino) that will be inherited by the incoming president. The report also noted that of the PHP 6.4 trillion outstanding debt, PHP 4.6 trillion was borrowed by the BS Aquino III Administration surpassing the borrowings of the previous Macapagal-Arroyo Administration. See Sauler (2016).

⁸ Neoliberalism or neoliberal economics is a set of ideas emphasizing the "efficiency of market competition, the role of individuals in determining economic outcomes, and distortions associated with government intervention and regulation of markets" (Palley, 2004, p.1). Neoliberalism's popularity started in the 1970s and became associated with the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States following their respective elections in 1979 and 1981. Simply put, neoliberalism argues that the market is good and should be free from state intervention while government is bad. Neoliberal economic policies during the Thatcher-Reagan era came to be codified in the Washington Consensus.

disadvantageous trade rules and policies embedded in the WTO have all contributed to a state violation of the Filipinos' right to food.

3.3.1 International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and their Loan Conditionalities

In 1944, 44 state and government representatives met in the town of Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA for the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference to discuss financial arrangements for a post-war world and agree on a framework for international economic cooperation. The conference resulted in the establishment of the IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (hereinafter IBRD), which later became (part of) the World Bank. Born out of the plan⁹ to create an institution tasked with overseeing an international monetary system that will ensure stability of exchange rates and the elimination of exchange restrictions, the IMF was then formalized in 1945 with 29 member countries signing the Articles of Agreement¹⁰ which contained, among other purposes of the Fund, the promotion of international monetary cooperation, the facilitation of the expansion and balanced growth of international trade, and the promotion of exchange stability. It should be emphasized that international trade was among the IMF's original purposes.¹¹ Under Article I (ii), the Fund is established "to facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade, and to contribute thereby to the promotion and maintenance of high levels of employment and real income and to the development of productive resources of all members as primary objectives of economic policy" (IMF, 1944, p.1). On 27 March 1986, the IMF established the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) "to provide balance of payments assistance on concessional terms to low-income developing countries" (IMF, undated), and by 29 December 1987, the SAF was replaced by the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) "to provide resources to low-income members undertaking strong

⁹ See "Cooperation and reconstruction (1944-71)", About the IMF, in International Monetary Fund, undated, <https://www.imf.org/external/about/histcoop.htm>.

¹⁰ See "Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund", April 2016. International Monetary Fund, undated, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/aa/index.htm>.

¹¹ Ibid., Article I: Purposes (ii). See also Articles of Agreement, International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, Bretton Woods, N.H., July 1 to 22, 1944. Washington, D.C.: US Treasury, https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/docs/historical/martin/17_07_19440701.pdf.

three-year macroeconomic and structural program to improve their balance of payments and foster growth” (IMF, undated). By 22 November 1999, the ESAF was replaced by the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) which was aimed at “foster[ing] durable growth [and] thereby raising living standards and reducing poverty” (IMF, undated).

On the other hand, the IBRD, which later became one of the five member institutions comprising the World Bank Group, was established to finance the reconstruction and development of war-torn European countries. Post-European reconstruction, however, the IBRD’s mandate evolved so that, together with three other members of the World Bank Group, it now works “to help developing countries reduce poverty, promote economic growth and build prosperity” (World Bank, 2014). The World Bank asserts “poverty reduction through an inclusive and sustainable globalization” (World Bank, undated) as the all-encompassing objective of their work.

Table 3.2 “From the Washington Consensus to Inclusive Growth”
(Saad-Filho, 2010, p.14; Rodrik, 2006, p. 978)

<u>Original Washington Consensus</u> (from early 1980s to late 1990s)	<u>Post-‘Washington Consensus’</u> (from late 1990s to late 2000s)	<u>Inclusive Growth</u> (from late 2000s)
Secure property rights	Anti-corruption	Competitive environment
Deregulation	Corporate governance	Government commitment to growth
Fiscal discipline	Independent central bank and IT	“Good policies”
Tax reform	Financial codes and standards	Public sector investment
Privatization	Flexible labour markets	Labour market deregulation
Reorientation of public expenditures	WTO agreements	Employment and productivity growth
Financial liberalization	“Prudent” capital account opening	International integration
Trade liberalization	Non-intermediate exchange rate regimes	Exchange rate management
Openness to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	Social safety nets	Social safety nets
Unified and competitive exchange rates	Targeted poverty reduction	

During the international debt crisis of the 1980s, the IMF, and mainly with the help of the US government, found an opportunity to become the main

implementers of a set of neoliberal economic policies—the Washington Consensus.¹² The IMF extended credit to countries in exchange for political and social concessions¹³, thus in 1985, the Philippines was among those that underwent a debt rescheduling measure through the Baker Plan¹⁴ which involved “structural reform and adjustment efforts in return for financial support from foreign official and bank creditors... from the IMF to the World Bank as the lead institution in debt management” (Cline, 1989, p. ii).

	Banks(a)	Public Sector			Total
		Multilateral	Bilateral	IMF	
Argentina	2,607	1,680	716	844	5,847
Bolivia	0	555	230	111	896
Brazil	4,000	1,556	-385	-2,032	3,139
Chile	215	1,132	87	-3	1,431
Colombia	1,957	952	286	0	2,195
Costa Rica	0	134	-17	-146	-29
Cote d'Ivoire	0	502	357	-226	633
Ecuador	0	858	264	-39	1,083
Jamaica	0	154	110	-327	-63
Mexico	5,472	2,190	2,301	1,166	11,129
Morocco	0	949	553	-495	1,007
Nigeria	0	1,009	704	0	1,713
Peru	0	314	180	-52	442
Philippines	525	355	928	-185	1,623
Uruguay	0	174	-9	-113	52
Venezuela	0	145	-215	0	-70
Yugoslavia	0	-59	-280	-1,171	-1,510
Total	13,776	12,601	5,809	-2667	29,518

a. Disbursements under new money packages.

Source: World Bank, *World Debt Tables 1988*, Vol. I, p. ixliii; Vol. II; IMF, *International Financial Statistics*, January 1989; and World Bank, by communication. Estimates include bank lending of \$4 billion to Brazil completed in late 1988.

Figure 3.3 Capital Flows Under the Baker Plan: 1986-1988 (Cline, 1989, p.44)

Dohner and Intal (1989b) noted that in 1982, the Philippine government came under increasing pressure from international creditors especially the IMF and the World Bank and the country had to change its policy course by “cutting national

¹² In 1990 John Williamson coined the phrase Washington Consensus as he looked at how “a desirable set of economic policy reforms” (1990, p.1) can deal with the Latin American debt crisis by identifying and discussing 10 policy instruments, namely, a) fiscal discipline; b) a redirection of public expenditure priorities; c) tax reform; d) interest rate liberalization; e) a competitive exchange rate; f) trade liberalization; g) liberalization of inflows of foreign direct investment; h) privatization; i) deregulation; and j) securitization of property rights. See also WILLIAMSON, J. 2000. What Should the World Bank Think about the Washington Consensus? *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15, 251-264.

¹³ On 2 December 1985 then-IMF Managing Director de Larosière and then-World Bank President Clausen “express[ed] broad support for the debt initiative proposed by U.S. Treasury Secretary James A. Baker” (IMF, undated). The proposal included “comprehensive adjustment measures by debtors, increased and more effective structural lending by multilateral development banks, and expanded lending by commercial banks” (IMF, undated).

¹⁴ As reported by Cline (1989), the Baker Plan “called for structural reform by the debtor countries” (1989, p.3) in three areas namely, “trade liberalization, the liberalization of policies toward direct foreign investment, and reform of the state enterprise sector, including through privatization (Cline, 1989, p.3). See Figure 1: “Table 2: Capital Flows Under the Baker Plan: 1986-1988” in Cline (1989, p.44).

government expenditure and dramatically slowing the growth of the money supply” (1989b, p. 185). By 1984, due to additional pressure from the IMF, the government “devalued [the peso] further, reduced export taxes, and abandoned the exchange surrender requirement unifying the exchange rate” (Dohner and Intal, 1989b, p. 186). The IMF was so concerned with inflation and the growth in the money supply so it “demanded a reduction in the level of the money supply as a precondition for an agreement” (Dohner & Intal, 1989b, p.186), so that the agreed adjustment program “had stringent monetary growth restrictions” (Dohner & Intal, 1989b, p.186). To meet the Funds preconditions, the Philippine Central Bank had to sell bills that had interest rates above 40 percent. As pointed out by Dohner and Intal, “per capita incomes fell by 15 percent from 1983 to 1985, with a further 3 percent fall in 1986” (1989b, p.187) and “total investment expenditure fell by 50 percent” (1989b, p.187) as the manufacturing sector got badly hit with huge losses especially for industries that were protected in the 1970s. During the course of the adjustment program, not only was there “little change in the balance of incentives for traded goods” (1989b, p.187), there was also a “4 percent reduction in the volume of exports” (Dohner & Intal, 1989b, p.187).

A SAPRIN¹⁵ report pointed out that generally speaking, structural adjustment is a set of policy reforms the goals of which are “to correct “structural” disequilibrium in the external and public balances and to eliminate distortions that allegedly prevent an efficient allocation of resources in the economy” (SAPRIN, undated, p.8). Officially, there is distinction between stabilization—a short-term loan package aimed at improving macro-economic balance and stability and is usually associated with IMF, and adjustment—a medium- to long-term loan package aimed at removing distortions in product and factor markets (SAPRIN, undated, p.8). However, the same SAPRIN report argues that in practice, the distinction between the two “has become blurred” (SAPRIN, undated, p.8). The report also pointed out that while policy reforms or loan conditionalities attached in SAPs usually come from the IMF and the World Bank, other multilateral financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), or foreign development agencies, such as Japan’s Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan’s Export-Import Bank

¹⁵ Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (SAPRIN).

(JEXIM), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and similar agencies that the Philippine government has received assistance from also support the reforms pushed by the IMF and World Bank (SAPRIN, undated, p.8). While the Philippines has “undergone numerous episodes of IMF stabilization programs” from 1962 when it availed its first IMF loan, the Philippines received from the World Bank a total of USD 2.376 billion of structural adjustment loans (SALs) via 10 different packages between 1980 and 1998 (SAPRIN, undated, p.8). The policies or loan conditionalities that the Philippines and other countries had to comply with ranged from reduction of public expenditure, devaluation of currency and liberalization of foreign exchange, decontrol of prices, removal of subsidies, privatization and/or reform of government corporations, deregulation of interest rates, liberalization of trade, promotion of exports, and reforms in fiscal, financial and investment policy. The Philippines received structural adjustment and sectoral adjustment loans in the following years: a) 1980 – First Structural Adjustment Loan (Loan 1903-PH) amounting to USD 200 million from the IBRD, b) 1983 – Second Structural Adjustment Loan (Loan 2266-PH) amounting to USD 302.3 million from the IBRD, and c) 1984 – Agricultural Sector/Inputs Project (Loan 2469-PH) amounting to USD 150 million from the IBRD (Johnson & Wasty, 1993, p.15, 20-21). In 1989, the country also received the ADB- and OECF-financed Fisheries Sector Program (Loans 971(SF)/972-PHI) amounting to USD 80 million. Through 24 projects, the ADB has lent to the Philippines for the Agriculture and Natural Resources sector a total of USD 1.228 billion between 1986 and 2001 (ADB, 2003, p.15)

FDC¹⁶ asserts that the Philippine government’s debt-financed development policy made the country vulnerable to the damaging conditionalities, and that the oil, power, food, and agrarian reform crises are “direct results of conditionalities” (FDC, 2008a, p.1). Instead of rescuing the government from its fiscal dilemma, the loans and

¹⁶ Established in 1987, the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) grew from its advocacy on “freedom from illegitimate debt”—debt which is a product of the Marcos dictatorship, of cronyism, and of a government policy of debt-driven growth. According to FDC, “Ferdinand Marcos employed debt in his fiscal management to finance the government’s development programs and to fatten his pockets and those of his cronies in the midst of an economy that was failing into ruin” (FDC, undated). The advocacy became more relevant as in 1986, at the joint session of the US Congress, the Aquino Administration pronounced an “honor-all-debt policy”.

the conditionalities attached to them became instruments that forced the government to “swallow painful, industry-wide ‘reforms’ acquiescent with the paradigm of neo-liberal globalization – that of liberalization, deregulation and privatization” (FDC, 2008a, p.1).

In understanding the impact of neoliberal economic policies on the Filipinos’ right to food, the processes of the Philippine Citizens’ Assessment of Structural Adjustment¹⁷ (hereinafter Philippine-CASA) and the global tri-lateral Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative¹⁸ (hereinafter SAPRI) provide some guidance. Long before undertaking IMF and World Bank structural adjustment, the Philippine government had already been preoccupied with cash-crop production and agriculture-for-export but, as pointed out by the Philippine-CASA process, the lowering of tariff and non-tariff barriers to food and agricultural imports under an indiscriminate program of trade liberalization, in addition to cuts in government spending for agricultural services as part of structural adjustment, resulted to weak domestic production due to the flooding of cheaper imports. As incomes were affected, small and poor farmers had to convert their lands to produce export crops like bananas. Liberalization of prices following privatization of the marketing board also impacted negatively on the farmers. Food security in the country was undermined as insufficient government support for infrastructure services (i.e. irrigation, post-harvest facilities and farm-to-market roads) mean small-scale farmers were unable to improve productivity or to bring their goods to market at prices that will include all costs involved in production. Land conversion and export crop cultivation have imposed extensive social and environmental costs on large segments of society. Further impoverishment and marginalization of small-scale farmers and the disproportionate burden on women due to loss of food security led to the displacement of rural communities and massive migration to the cities. Among the resulting environmental impacts include soil degradation and loss of biodiversity given the extensive use of chemicals for export crops and mono-cropping.

¹⁷ Based on the 2001 document entitled “The Impact of Structural Adjustment Policies on Food Security in the Philippines: A Summary Report”, available online at http://www.saprin.org/philippines/research/phi_food_security_sum.pdf.

¹⁸ Based on the 2002 report from the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (SAPRI) entitled “The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis and Poverty”, available online at http://www.saprin.org/SAPRI_Findings.pdf.

The Philippine-CASA report “The Impact of Structural Adjustment Policies on Food Security” detailed the impacts through two sectoral cases at the macro and micro levels. The first study looked at the impact of SAP-induced tight fiscal policies on the rice industry as a proxy to the impact on food security at the macro level and on the food security of small farmers at the micro level. It found that in the period from 1984 to 1992, the country had only three years of positive trade balance in rice. And whereas until 1983 the Philippines was a net rice exporter, from 1993, the country registered a negative trade balance and it has become chronically dependent on imports from abroad in order to meet the population’s dietary needs. The report also pointed to the fact that the industry was only trading internationally about 5% of total production and that a significant degree of volatility involved prices, and these two combined posed a serious threat to Filipinos’ food security. Low productivity level led to low income for rice farmers whose main source of ‘entitlement’ came from rice production.

The second study in the Philippine-CASA report looked at the impact of SAP-induced export-promotion policies on the food security of coastal communities and it found that intensive and semi-intensive shrimp farming for export – an activity that, the study claimed, can be traced back to policy reforms introduced by SAPs – resulted to several negative environmental conditions which ultimately “eroded income” (SAPRIN, undated) as well as undermined the community’s capacity to secure enough food for all people at all times.

In *Hungry and Indebted* FDC narrated how the story of Philippine agriculture’s decline was “accompanied and even facilitated by the story of worsening debt situation” (FDC, 2008d, p.1). They argue of a “debt-driven agriculture” in the country because the government, instead of spending for agriculture, became addicted to Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a means of financing projects and programs in agriculture. FDC pointed out that much of ODA come with large loan components, sometimes as high as 82% to 84%. So in 2007 it was not surprising that agriculture was responsible for around USD 1.4 billion of the national government outstanding foreign debt (FDC, 2008d, p. 6). As evidence, FDC showed that the Department of Agriculture, in 2005, had 32 Foreign-Assisted Projects (FAPs) in their portfolio whereas the Department of Agrarian Reform, in 2006, spent around PHP

62.32 billion worth of ODA money for the implementation of CARP (FDC, 2008d, p.6).

To demonstrate how IFI loans and their conditionalities came to be instruments for the Philippine government to adopt neoliberal economic reforms and policies, FDC showcased two concrete examples relevant to agriculture and the right to food. The first case involved the ADB loan for the Grain Sector Development Project (GSDP) and the other is the joint Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF)-World Bank loan for the Community-Managed Agrarian Reform and Poverty Reduction Project (CMARPRP). Using CMARPRP as one example, FDC also argued that a) the use of agrarian reform communities (ARC)-based framework of ODA-funded Agrarian Reform and Rural Development programs is not only ineffective but also does not address the root cause of the problem—land tenure and land redistribution; and b) that the assumptions behind the World Bank’s “Market-Assisted Land Reform” are not only wrong, but that the whole economic framework on supply and demand runs counter to the social justice spirit of agrarian reform (FDC, 2008c).

3.3.1.1 Grains Sector Development Program (GSDP)

The Grains Sector Development Program (hereinafter GSDP) was formulated under the Corazon Aquino Administration the aim of which was to institutionalize major reforms in food pricing and buffer stocking, however the program did not materialize until year 2000 under the Estrada Administration (Tolentino, 2002). Supported by a USD 175 million loan from the Asian Development Bank, the GSDP was a set of “policy and institutional reforms, sector investments and advisory technical assistance projects aimed at making the grains sector more productive and internationally competitive while helping the country meet its food security objectives” (Tolentino, 2002, p.2). Aside from financing investments in the areas of irrigation, advanced technology in the production of rice and corn, and policy and planning capacity, the bulk of the GSDP loan is essentially meant to strengthen privatization in the grain sector through the by privatization of the NFA. As stated in the ADB Program Completion Report, “the ambitious purpose of the Program, which sought to redefine the role of the key grain sector institution (the state-owned NFA),

liberalize grain trading, and encourage greater private investment in the sector” (ADB, 2007, p. 5).

As highlighted in Tolentino (2002), the privatization of the NFA was “at the heart of reforms” and that while the mission of the NFA – buying high from farmers, selling low to consumers, and storing long to stabilize prices – was “praiseworthy”, the agency’s performance in the last thirty years indicates that it “has been impossible to achieve its mission” (TA 3429, 2001, cited in Tolentino, 2002, p.2). Additionally, Tolentino argued that the NFA’s monopoly in international rice trading has not only “maintained high farmgate and thereby high consumer rice prices”, but also “contributed to an overreliance of policymakers on price intervention instruments rather than productivity increases to support farmers’ incomes and ensure domestic food security” (Tolentino, 2002, p.2).

FDC described the GSDP case as “debt conditioning the agricultural sector” (2008d, p.9) precisely because of how its policy loan component, for example, wanted to “change the fundamentals of grain sector performance”, from “procurement pricing, import liberalization, private sector participation in importation [to] grains markets regulation” (FDC, 2008d, p.10). The investment loan component of GSDP, on the other hand, was meant to “finance investments in irrigation, advanced rice and corn production technology, and improved capacity in policy and planning” (FDC, 2008d, p.10). However, by 2003, due to strong resistance from the rice cartel, Macapagal-Arroyo administration requested for cancellation of around USD 70 million of the policy loan, which ultimately led to ADB’s termination of the two GSDP loans.

3.3.2 Trade Liberalization and its Impact on Philippine Agriculture and the Right to Food

The Europe-Third World Centre (CETIM)¹⁹ described the Agreement on Agriculture (hereinafter AoA) in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade-Uruguay Round (GATT-UR)—the precursor of the World Trade Organization

¹⁹ In 2000, Europe-Third World Centre (CETIM), submitted the statement to the UN Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights entitled “Liberalization Threatens Food Sovereignty and Dims the Prospects of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines”. See E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/NGO/5. See also <http://www.cetim.ch/en/interventions/142/l-omc-et-la-reforme-agraire-aux-philippines>.

(hereinafter WTO), to be an unfair and uneven agreement as its goal was to solve the persistent problem of agricultural overproduction in the developed world by expanding markets in the developing world while consolidating and strengthening the monopoly control on food and agricultural sectors by transnational corporations (TNCs) from industrialized countries particularly the US and the European Union (CETIM, 2000). The AoA has not stopped the advanced economies from subsidizing overproduction and dumping exports on developing countries, however, it has successfully prevented developing countries from taking any steps to protect their domestic agriculture. Indeed, this was the case when the Philippines ratified the GATT-UR in 1994.

According to the 2003 Report coordinated by Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (hereinafter TFDP), “certain steps taken by government in the implementation of its obligations as member of the WTO exacerbate the lives of those already below the poverty line and deprive indigenous peoples’ access to their own means of subsistence, including their right to adequate food” ((TFDP), 2003). In joining the WTO and signing the AoA, the government enacted the Agricultural Tariffication Act or Republic Act 8178 (hereinafter RA 8178) which then repealed Paragraph 10 of Section 23 of the Magna Carta for Small Farmers of 1991 or Republic Act 7607 (hereinafter RA 7607). The paragraph – which stated that “importation shall not be allowed on agricultural products that are produced locally in sufficient quantity” – sought to protect the products of small farmers by restricting the importation of competing agricultural products. However, under RA 8178 the country committed itself to eliminating quantitative restrictions or quotas in the imports of all agricultural goods except for rice, which then had a requirement of “minimum access” for importation with the volume rising from one percent of domestic consumption in the first year to four percent within 10 years time. The 2003 Report argued that “the repeal of the Magna Carta for Small Formers was a retrogressive action of government violating the rights of small farmers in the country” (TFDP, 2003).

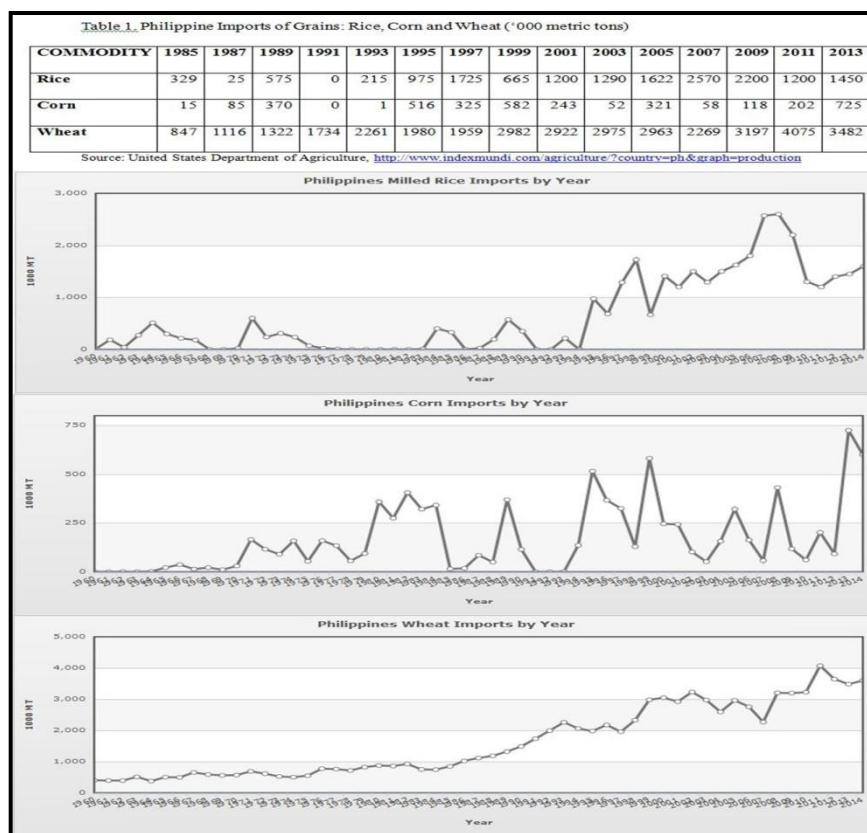


Figure 3.4 Philippine Imports of Grains: Rice, Corn and Wheat, 1985-2013

Pascual and Glipo (2001) concurred by asserting that in the seven years the country was under the GATT-WTO rule, the agricultural sector had “not shown any signs of the promised remarkable growth under a liberalized trading regime (p.1). In the debates prior to the GATT-Uruguay Round ratification²⁰, the government presented benefits including an increase in annual agricultural export earnings by at least PHP 3.4 billion, an increase in the annual gross value added of agriculture by PHP 60 billion, and the creation of an additional 500,000 jobs, however, these did not materialize by year 2000. Instead, agricultural imports²¹ had outpaced exports and turned the country into a net food importer by the end of 2000. The report also noted that from 1995 to 2001, rice imports, for example, had flooded the domestic market, peaking at 2 million metric tons in 1998. In the seven years since joining the world

²⁰ Focus on the Global South (2003) noted that “In the Senate debates on the ratification of the GATT-Uruguay Round Agreements in 1994-1995, the main proponents of ratification led by then Senator Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo painted a very rosy picture of the future of the country under the WTO”.

²¹ See Figure 2. Philippine Imports of Grains: Rice, Corn and Wheat (1985-2013).00.

trade body, Philippine traditional export crops like coconut, abaca and sugar had in fact lost markets while heavy imports of corn, milk beef, vegetables, oil and other food items contributed to further widening the country's trade gap in agriculture.

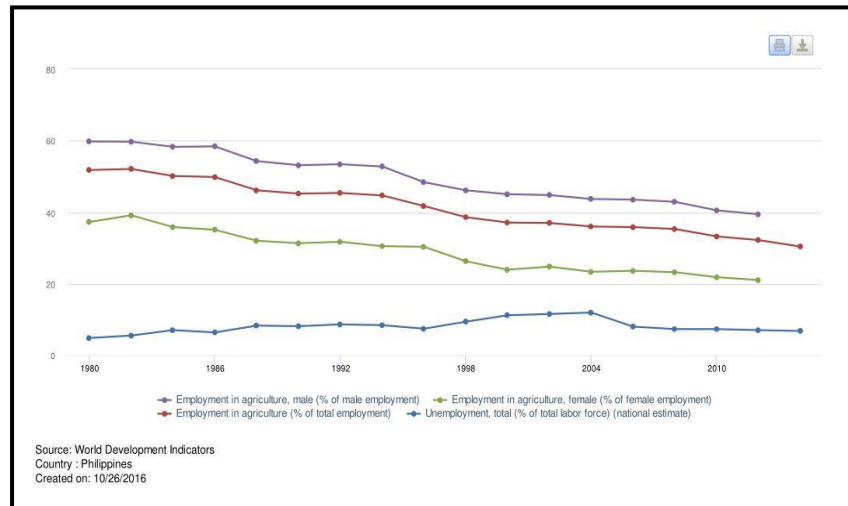


Figure 3.5 Philippine Percentage of Employment in Agriculture and Percentage of Total Unemployment from years 1980 to 2014 (World Bank, World Development Indicators, online).

In many Asian countries, “accelerated trade liberalization has led to massive job losses in the agriculture sector” (Glipo, 2003, p.10). In the Philippines, 710,000 jobs were lost in agriculture in 1998, representing a reduction of 6% from the 1996 employment level (Glipo, 2003, p.10). Hundreds of thousands of rice, corn and vegetable growers were displaced with many ending up as contract growers or farm workers in multinational agri-business plantations (Glipo, 2003, p.10). Employment in agriculture dropped to 10.85 million in 2001 from 11.29 million in 1994. World Bank data show employment in agriculture as percentage of total employment dropping from 45.7% in 1994 to 37.0% in 2000 and then to 32.2% in 2012.²² The 2008 FIAN Report documented onion farmers from Nueva Ecija and other provinces, vegetable growers from the Cordillera regions, corn farmers from Mindanao, and rice farmers as among the hardest hit due to the flooding of cheap agriculture imports (FIAN

²² Sharp decline in employment in agriculture in the mid-1990s correspond to rise in unemployment. See Figure 3.5 Employment in Agriculture as percentage of Total Employment. Source: World Bank Development Indicators for Philippines.

Philippines, 2008, p.18). Proponents of free trade argued that trade expansion and growth will lead to poverty reduction but the country's poverty rate in 2000 was 27.5 percent of the population, compared to 25.0 percent in 1997. In 2014, the Philippine Statistics Authority acknowledged that fisherfolk and farmers are among the consistently poor of basic sectors in the country (PSA, 20014).

Tauli-Corpuz et al's (2006) study on the impact of globalization and liberalisation on agriculture and small farmers looked at the commitments made by the country under the WTO and the social effects of liberalisation on two case studies—the first, a vegetable farming village and the second, a poultry-producing community. The first case involved a typical indigenous peoples' vegetable growing village under the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) project which was USD 1.4 million loan financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The village was previously engaged in subsistence production but shifted to cash crop production through the help of the government poverty alleviation program which ran from 1997 to 2004. Food insecurity, diminishing health, and low school attendance were among the negative social impacts the study found. Rice had to be sourced outside the village since they were not involved in rice farming. This led to costs for food and for commercial farm inputs to compete with each other resulting to the 'ranking in budget allocation' which then led to education and health being sacrificed. Respondents in the study claimed that instability in income due to the flooding of vegetable imports led to their children's education being all the more sacrificed (Tauli-Corpuz, et al, 2006, p.36). A fourth of the study's respondents claimed they were no longer able to send their children to school the following year. The findings were corroborated by regional data which indicated that the share of the poorest families to total income and expenditures did not improve between 1988 and 2000. As cited from a government report, in 1988 the families belonging to the first to fourth deciles had shares of total regional income and expenditures of only 13% and 17% respectively; and that some 100,698 families lived below the poverty threshold and some 49,573 families still lived below subsistence²³ (cited from NEDA, 2002 Regional Development Plan).

²³ Cited from National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), 2003. *Regional Development Report 2002*. Cordillera Administrative Region, Baguio City.

The second case from Tauli-Corpuz et al's study is that of a poultry, corn, and rice-producing rural lowland community in the Southern Tagalog municipality of Alaminos, Laguna Province. The study pointed out that during the WTO negotiations, the government had made serious technical mistakes in its allocation of the minimum volume of imports for certain goods also known as "minimum access volume" (MAV) such that final commitments made were more than what was intended and more than what was required under the AoA.²⁴ The mistake led to the dumping of cheap imported chicken and chicken parts in 1996 with more than 85% of the imports coming from the US (as cited from a report by the Philippine Daily Inquirer). Tauli-Corpuz et al pointed out another failure from the government involving the funding for the safety nets, infrastructure and competitiveness-enhancing public investments intended for protection against possible the negative impacts upon entry of the country into the WTO. PHP 128 billion was committed to the fund but the Department of Agriculture confirmed that only 40 percent of the amount was released. The government provided domestic support in agriculture amounting to 4 percent of the value of agricultural production but this was way below the allowed 10 percent under the WTO. The study concluded that liberalization of the import regime led to increased imports of agricultural products into the country as well as the greater concentration in the poultry industry with increased domination by the big integrators leading to increased control, not only in the production of poultry, but also in the supply of poultry feed which all led to increased marginalization of contract growers and small backyard producers. The study pointed to the fact that WTO agreements favored large-scale feed mills, which are also big integrators, as well as organized large-scale commercial hog and poultry firms, leaving other independent poultry producers effectively blocked from participation and small and medium scale independent producers to disappear. The study noted that during cases of industry crises contract growers, whose main assets were their real estate properties, had

²⁴ As noted in Tauli-Corpuz et al, the intended commitment was only 2,570 heads of swine but the government committed almost 2.6 million heads and whereas 1.65 million heads of live poultry and 2,218 metric tons of poultry meat were intended commitments but the final commitments were 5.7 million heads live poultry heads and 14,090 metric tons of poultry meat (Tauli-Corpuz et al., 2006, p.8). The report also noted that the Philippine government tried to rectify the situation but the objection from the United States, European Union and Japan meant that the original amounts placed in the schedule stayed.

limited recourse and so they became dependent on integrators. Finally, Tauli-Corpuz et al found that the rise in chicken imports not only reduced demand in chicken but also led to reduction in contracted work by as much as 60% (Tauli-Corpuz, et al., 2006, p.50). The study also pointed out that despite more than ten years of profitable commercial poultry farming, Alaminos did not develop economically and remained a fourth class municipality²⁵, but that the big players (integrators) and junior partners (contract growers) were the ones to make huge profits from the operations.

It is worth emphasizing that the WTO is not under the United Nations, but its work complements those of the IMF and the World Bank. The WTO asserts itself as “the unique forum for global trade rule-making and liberalization, while also recognizing that regional trade agreements can play an important role in promoting the liberalization and expansion of trade and in fostering development” (WTO, 2001). The WTO has committed itself to “continue to work with the Bretton Woods institutions for greater coherence in global economic policy-making” (WTO, 2001). With regards to the AOA, the WTO’s objective is “to establish a fair and market-oriented trading system through a programme of fundamental reform encompassing strengthened rules and specific commitments on support and protection in order to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets” (WTO, 2001). It commits itself to “comprehensive negotiations aimed at: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support” (WTO, 2001). The WTO uses the language of ‘food security’ and ‘rural development’ for developing countries within the context of further economic integration by opening up domestic markets and reducing what it calls trade-distorting subsidies. In *The Politics of Food*, Schanbacher noted that “the neoliberal economic model based on efficiency, competition, profit maximization, and a free market provides the context for achieving food security” (2010, p.10), therefore, it is not surprising that the WTO Agreement on Agriculture has produced the same negative impacts as that of the economic policies imposed by the IMF and the World Bank in their loans.

²⁵ Alaminos is currently classified as a 3rd class municipality which means its average annual income now is between 34-45 million pesos, an improvement from its status as a 4th class municipality with an average annual income of 25-35 million pesos. See <http://alaminoslaguna.info/>. See also Income Classification for Provinces, Cities and Municipalities, [Online] Available at http://www.nscb.gov.ph/activestats/psgc/articles/con_income.asp.

Madeley's (2000) study on the impact of trade liberalization—under the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Agriculture, the World Bank-IMF SAPs, and other regional trade agreements—on food security and poverty showed twelve general effects namely, a) “cheap imports damage the livelihoods of small-scale farmers” (p.2) ; b) “more land and resources being devoted to export crops and less to domestic food production” (p.3); c) trade liberalization is beneficial for transnational corporations at the expense of the poor; d) landlessness and greater concentration of land ownership; e) heightened gender inequality and heavy impact on women; f) unemployment; g) soil degradation, water resource depletion, and biodiversity loss due to agricultural intensification and export mono cropping; h) reduction in government support for the agricultural sector; i) food insufficiency and loss of food sovereignty; j) increase in the number and power of traders over farmers; k) rural to urban migration due to the non-viability of agriculture for small-farmers; and l) loss of income and entitlements to food (2000). Overall, the research found the following: a) “trade liberalization has brought significant changes in terms of shifts of power” (Madeley, 2000, p.7)—transnational corporations benefit more from liberalization at the expense of the food-insecure; and b) “wholesale liberalisation of food trade does not address the problem of food security and poverty eradication” (Madeley, 2000, p.8).

3.4 Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA)

In the previous chapter, under the section on the Philippine Food Security, Framework, the AFMA is not only the blueprint for agriculture and rural development in the country but also the codification of the government's productionist, market, and food security-food sufficiency approach to food.

The 2010 *Philippines Right to Food Assessment* found that AFMA satisfies the obligation of progressive realization as the law sought to ensure that state resources are dedicated to ensuring adequate supply of food and that farmer-producers are able to produce food in a sustainable, efficient and globally-competitive manner. On account of the core obligation, the AFMA is found to fulfill this as it explicitly states the obligation of the state to ensure the availability, accessibility, adequacy and affordability of food at all times, although there is no explicit state obligation

regarding freedom from hunger at all times. AFMA provides for ensuring equitable access but does not indicate the manner by which those vulnerable to inequity are provided food. The study also found that the AFMA fulfills the non-discrimination obligation as it indicates the consideration of the needs and situation of disadvantaged sectors—indigenous peoples, women, and youth in the planning and implementation of the law. It also indicates the prohibition of discrimination against aforementioned sectors. AFMA does not address both the state obligation to respect the right to food and the obligation particular to international cooperation and assistance. The obligation to protect is present in AFMA as it spells out the protection of land use especially those for agriculture and fisheries. On the other hand, the obligation to fulfill is likewise present as AFMA sought to devote resources towards enhancing agricultural productivity via incentives, technology transfers, and provision of funds and other mechanism aimed at ensuring food self-sufficiency. Overall, the 2010 Assessment found that while AFMA does not explicitly recognize the right to food, the law uses the rights discourse as the general objective is to ensure the availability, access and adequacy of food. The study also found that AFMA does not explicitly state and guarantee freedom from hunger.

The 2010 Assessment also pointed out that while equity and agricultural productivity were AFMA's goals, the achievement of said goals were contingent on "market approaches to the development of the agriculture and fisheries sectors" and that the law had a "clear bias towards ensuring the welfare of food consumers particularly those in lower income groups" (de los Reyes and Diokno, 2010, p.9). Additionally, the 2010 Assessment pointed to how laws that supplemented the AFMA (i.e. Republic Act No. 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code, Republic Act No. 7607 or the Magna Carta for Small Farmers, Republic Act No. 7884 or the National Dairy Act, and Republic Act No. 7900 or the High Value Crops Act), they all "subscribe to the use of market forces with state support as the primary levers of development" (de los Reyes and Diokno, 2010, p.9).

3.5 Summary

In 1991, Danilo Turk, the then Special Rapporteur on the Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, presented some basic postulates concerning socio-economic rights in his report on the “impact of structural adjustment on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights” (CHR, 1991). He stated:

Human rights do not exist in a vacuum. The fulfillment of all rights, including those of a socio-economic nature, are contingent upon a wide variety of economic, social, political, historical, philosophical and legal choices and forces. Each of these areas, in addition to others, will play a significant role in the realization of these rights (CHR, 1991, p. 19).

Then, in 2009, Olivier De Schutter talked about the “developmental process” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2) of hunger among small farmers and the historical robbery of their livelihoods. Hunger is related not only to the issue of food production but also to “marginalization, deepening inequalities, and social injustice” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2). Small farmers have been pushed to the margins and forgotten from public policies because they were neither a political constituency nor an economic sector.

Based on the above statements of both UN Special Rapporteurs, this chapter has demonstrated that there is a case to be made about certain economic, social, political, historical, philosophical and legal choices and forces that the Philippine state made and was subjected to and their impacts on the fulfillment of the human rights of farmers. As shown here in this chapter, the Philippine government was coerced and later acquiesced first to structural adjustment programs and then to neoliberal economic policies which eventually lead to the de-prioritization and neglect of the agriculture sector, as well as the prioritization of debt and debt servicing over spending for basic social services. In addition to the macroeconomic structural adjustments, the Philippines’ liberalization of trade and subsequent entry into the WTO resulted to what De Schutter calls as “marginalization, deepening inequalities, and social injustice” (De Schutter, 2009, p. 2). From being a rice exporter in the 1980s under Marcos, the country became a net importer of rice. In 2008, during the global food price crisis, the Philippines became the largest importer of rice, and today the

country continues to be in the top 3 major importers²⁶. As this chapter has shown, neoliberal ideology or neoliberalism as a force had weakened the Philippine state and its ability to fulfill obligations under the ICESCR. The “developmental process” of the poverty, hunger and violation of the right to food of Filipino farmers is tied to the Philippine government’s continued adoption of neoliberal economic policies.

²⁶ See IRRI, 2017. Why does the Philippines import rice? [Online] Available at: <http://irri.org/news/hot-topics/why-does-the-philippines-import-rice>. [Accessed 20 March 2017].

CHAPTER IV

F.I.E.L.D.S., THE RIGHT TO FOOD, AND NEOLIBERALISM

4.1 Introduction

As presented in Chapter I, given the urgency of the hunger problem in the Philippines, the research seeks to understand how state structures, systems, forces and relations influence the realization of the fundamental right to freedom of hunger and right to adequate of Filipino farmers. By investigating one particular government program – the Philippine Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers and Seeds (F.I.E.L.D.S.), the research wants to understand the government’s framework at addressing hunger and the right to food. The chapter tries to solve three specific puzzles: (a) how does the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program approach the problem and solution to hunger in the country; (b) how does the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program comply with international norms and standards on the right to food; and lastly (c) how has neoliberalism influenced the framework of F.I.E.L.D.S. regarding hunger and the right to food.

This chapter assesses the Philippine Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers and Seeds (F.I.E.L.D.S.) looking at its general framework on the issue of poverty and hunger, how it complies with international norms and standards on the right to food, and how much influence neoliberalism has on it. It shall look at five aspects of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program, namely, (a) its context, rationale and objectives; (b) its general approach to poverty and hunger; (c) its framework on food; (d) its compliance with the norms and standards on the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and the right to adequate food; and (e) its relationship with neoliberalism.

4.2 Context, Rationale and Objectives of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program

Launched on April 4, 2008, the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program was part of the government’s reaction to the global food price crisis that started in 2007 and continued

on in 2008. Acknowledged under the sections on “Rice Situation in the Philippines” and the “Impact of Global Developments on the Philippines”, the masterplan pointed out that the 2008 crisis was not of supply but of the price of food. The plan also acknowledged that the surge in the price of food was related to the surge in the price of fuel as well as to the market disruption caused by the interest of the US and EU then to invest in agrofuel or ethanol which is based from corn. Countries like the Philippines – which are not only food-importing and energy dependent, but also integrated into a global economy – was then subjected to the global market disruption.

However, while admitting that the food crisis then was one of price and not of supply, the masterplan also claimed that the rice price surge was partly due to the “export ban policies” (PhilRice, 2009, p.13) rice exporting countries had implemented at the time resulting then to a “thinning” volume of traded rice in the world market. The ultimate solution then, according to F.I.E.L.D.S. is “not to totally rely on the global market” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 15).

The plan illustrated that the country’ rice yields had generally been “on an upward swing since 1990” (PhilRice, 2009, p.8), except in year 1998. It added that land area for rice production had been “at excellent level” (PhilRice, 2009, p.8) despite large areas for rice production being “lost” (PhilRice, 2009, p.8) to commercial, residential, industrial and other purposes. Based on these, the plan argued that the Philippines can achieve 100% rice sufficiency within a specific timeframe by simply closing the yield gap¹ through a “package of interventions” in fertilizers, irrigation, extension, loans, dryers and seeds – or the acronym of “F.I.E.L.D.S.”. 100% rice self-sufficiency can be achieved through increased rice production and improved rice farmer productivity.

The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program is fleshed out in the Philippine Rice Masterplan 2009-2013: Enhancing Provincial Rice Self-Sufficiency.² Aside from the Rice

¹ The yield gap, according to the Program, is the difference between the actual farm yields and the attainable or best practice yields. Sources of yield increases, as identified by the Program, cover at least three farm conditions such as a) yield with best nutrient and cultural practices (limited by lodging), b) yield when macronutrient (NPK) and water problems exist, and c) yield when micronutrient, pest, and management problems exist.

² This is the updated version of the Philippine Rice Self-Sufficiency Master Plan 2009-2010: Focusing on Increasing Provincial Productivity. It is worth mentioning that while the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program technically ended with Macapagal-Arroyo’s term as president, the succeeding administration of

Masterplan, F.I.E.L.D.S. drew legal basis from three documents signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo which included a) Administrative Order No. 225 (AO 225)³, b) Administrative Order No. 225-A⁴ and c) Executive Order No. 725.⁵

The Program's specific objectives are the following: a) increased *palay* (or unhusked rice) production from 16.2 million metric tons (M MT) in 2007 to 21.6 M MT in 2013; b) augmented household income of farmers through increased rice yield and integrated rice-based farming systems; c) reduced, if not ended, rice importation by year 2013; d) reduced farmer dependency on heavy synthetic inputs; e) enhanced farmer self-reliance; and f) organized and empowered small farmers especially with regards to formulating and implementing local rice master plans (PhilRice, 2009, p.18). To achieve these, the Masterplan identified what it calls operational and strategic interventions such as: a) rehabilitation and restoration of irrigation systems to improve their effectiveness and efficiency; b) enhance biofertilizer production; c) use of high-quality hybrid and inbred seeds, including farmers' varieties; d) use of irrigated and sustainable crop management technologies; e) provision of soft loans for rice production; f) construction of shallow tube wells and surface water pumps; and g) provision of extension support services (PhilRice, 2009, p.16).

While acknowledging the 2008 rice price crisis in the Philippines was partly due to the country's integration in the global economy, the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program, with its market fundamentalist predispositions, paints a benign picture of the whole situation. The disruption in food prices is merely part of the global economy's shift towards "a new economic order" (PhilRice, 2009, p. 12). With regards to the rice situation in the country, there is no need to risk the existing order's stability or to put stakeholders in a maligned position (PhilRice, 2009, p. 6). And while the Program cautions the country "not to totally rely on the global market", it suggests enhancing "global competitiveness in the domestic and/or export markets" (PhilRice, 2009, p. 15)

Benigno S. Aquino III continued the plan but under a different name -- "Food Staples Self-Sufficiency Roadmap 2011-2016".

³ Administrative Order No. 225 (AO 225) is on "harnessing idle resources to uplift the poor and boost rice supply to cushion the country from price spikes".

⁴ Administrative Order No. 225-A is an amendment to AO 225.

⁵ Executive Order No. 725 directs and authorizes the Agriculture secretary "to manage and coordinate all efforts of relevant agencies of the Executive Department, Government Financial Institutions, and Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) to adopt measures to meet the challenge of the current world rice supply shortage."

through the pursuit of policy reforms and instruments towards achieving the goals of food security and poverty alleviation. The Program does not admit that there is something inherently flawed in how the global economy currently works, and how the Philippines had been made vulnerable and put at a disadvantaged position mainly because of its continued support and participation in this integrated global economic order. Scholars, economists, and human rights activists have effectively argued that, beyond the 2007-2008 food price crisis, there has been a longer-term global food crisis, and the culprit of both is the existing global economic order. And as shown in Chapter III, the country's acquiescence to structural adjustment programs and neoliberal economic policies has been detrimental to the state's ability to fulfill its human rights obligations particularly on the right to food of farmers.

4.3 The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program's Approach to Poverty and Hunger

Undoubtedly F.I.E.L.D.S. takes on a productionist approach to hunger as its ultimate objective is to make the Philippines achieve 100% self-sufficiency in rice which, according to the masterplan, can be done by simply closing the yield gap through increased rice production and improved rice farmer productivity. The Program briefly takes a neo-Malthusian argument when it points to the mismatch between supply – the steady increase in rice yield between 2002 and 2007 – and demand. The mismatch is said to be due to the “stubbornly high annual population increase pegged at 2.04%” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 5). The solution, therefore, according to the program, is self-sufficiency rice which involves making the necessary interventions to close the yield gap and reach and maintain 100% sufficiency or market availability of rice.

However, while F.I.E.L.D.S. takes on a productionist approach, it is argued here that the program is not at all geared towards addressing neither the hunger nor the poverty of farmers even though it sporadically claims to do so. Instead the productionist approach of F.I.E.L.D.S. is anchored on stabilizing the supply of rice in the market, and making rice affordable to the Filipino rice consumer, including the rice farmer. F.I.E.L.D.S. uses rhetoric like “enough rice for Filipinos” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 5) or “increased income of rice farmers” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 5), “improve[d] household food security and consumption” (PhilRice, 2009, p.10), and “enabl[ing] the

farmer to rise up from the pits of poverty and hunger” (PhilRice, 2009, p.34), yet, the entire plan – and the F.I.E.L.D.S. interventions – is mostly about the economics of rice in the country.

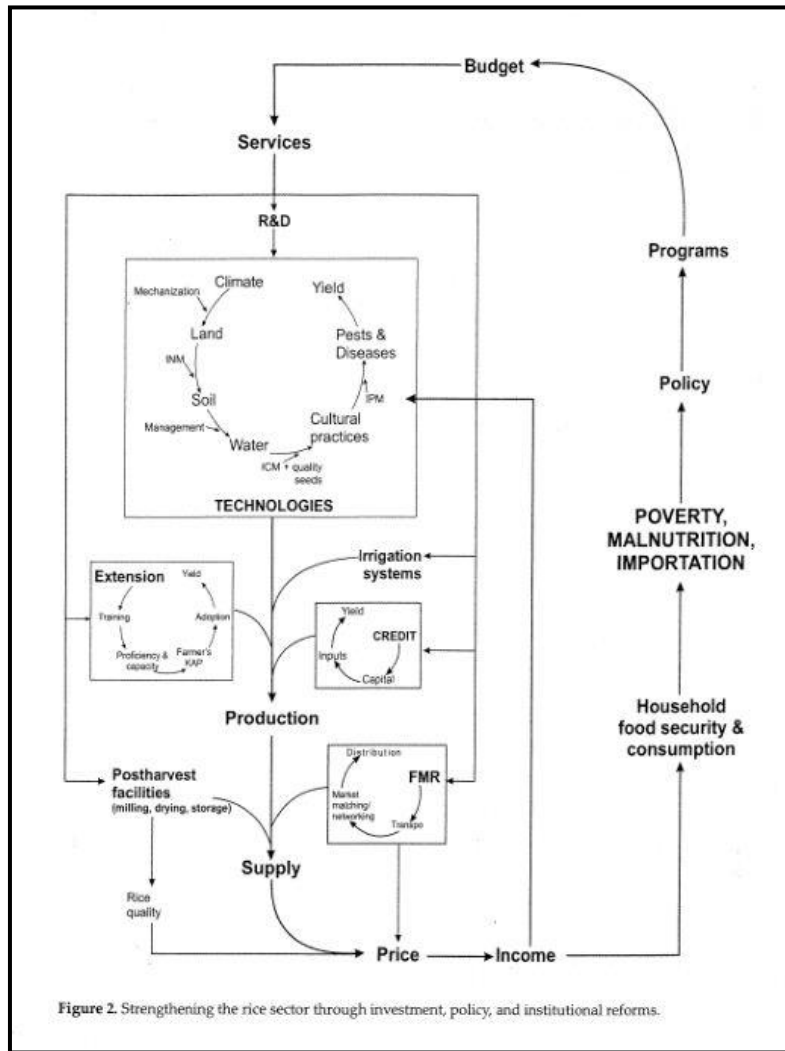


Figure 4.1 F.I.E.L.D.S. Program Flowchart on Strengthening the Rice Sector

All of the above can be attributed to the market fundamentalism of F.I.E.L.D.S. The Program argues that growth in the rice sector and the rice market will supposedly address the problems of poverty, malnutrition, food insecurity, as well as importation (see Figure 4.1 F.I.E.L.D.S. Program Flowchart on Strengthening the Rice Sector). Overall, the Program sees the market and economics as the ultimate answer to questions that, for the Philippines, have been generally political.

The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program's flowchart on strengthening the Philippine rice sector (see Figure 4.1) is indicative of how the plan views the problem and the solution to poverty and hunger. The main goal of the program is to increase rice production and to improve farmer productivity through investment, policy and institutional reforms. To increase production and productivity, there is an emphasis on technologies and technical interventions and support services such as extension, credit, and others (see left-hand side of Figure 4.1).

The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program's approach to poverty can be deduced from its argument that "low income simply reflects low levels of productivity" (PhilRice, 2009, p.10). Farmers are poor because they have low income which is a result of low productivity. Therefore, the simple solution to poverty is to improve productivity and enhance profitability for farmers. Increase in yield plus higher price shall mean higher farm income (PhilRice, 2009, p.8). All this is vital for the growth of the Philippine rice sector, the efficiency of the rice market, and the "global competitiveness" of the rice farmer. This then means that "investment, policy, infrastructure, education, and institutional reforms are vital in addressing poverty, malnutrition or food insecurity of the rural poor" (PhilRice, 2009, p.10).

The plan mentions of incremental and additional income for farmers being achieved if they only adopt and use "certified seeds" or hybrid seeds that are manufactured by public and private institutions. According to the masterplan, farmers' costs in seeds will also be reduced due to the government's subsidy in seeds which is "PHP 1,200 per bag in 2009 and PHP 600 per bag in 2010" (PhilRice, 2009, p.60). Government and grassroots studies, however, pointed to the inefficacy of these hybrid seeds and of the seed subsidy system. Farmers assert that seed hybridization is not the solution to the country's food problem, and will only "worsen the bankruptcy of the resource-poor farmers" (Manaytay, 2008). A government study claims that the country's hybrid rice program – which F.I.E.L.D.S. claims to have been responsible in the steady increase in rice yield – pointed out that most farmers "do not find the hybrid rice varieties to be economically superior to inbred varieties" (David, 20006, p.vi), and that the subsidy approach to hybrid rice has been "not just ineffective but costly in terms of wasting scarce budgetary resources, compromising the government's

regulatory functions, promoting corruption, and distorting farmers' choice of varieties" (David, 2006, p.vi).

F.I.E.L.D.S. assumes that increased rice production and improved farmer productivity will result to increase in farmer's incomes which will then translate to improved food security for the household. But this assumption has been proven to be inexact if not false partly because rice production and consumption involves a complex structure of various players, or what F.I.E.L.D.S. calls as "stakeholders" ranging from the inputs sector⁶ to production⁷, (farmgate) marketing, milling, (wholesale) marketing, importers, and then retailers (Briones and de la Pena, 2015). The farmer is just one of the components of the production aspect and various players/stakeholders compete with and affect the ability of the small farmer to make a living out of food production. F.I.E.L.D.S. actually acknowledges that "with unbearably high input costs, there's a big chance that farmers may not be able to maximize their rice yields" (PhilRice, 2009. P. 39). And yet the Plan's solution to this is meager credit assistance and with the contradictory policy of using land as collateral for loans. The state-run National Food Authority (NFA)⁸ shall play a major role in F.I.E.L.D.S. as well by providing marketing assistance to farmers but the agency has been hounded by corruption and mismanagement issues that has put the small farmers at a disadvantage. It should also be pointed out the Philippines is well-integrated into the global market not only for input but also the outputs—the country imports both rice and the inputs to produce rice, and global forces are no match for the simple Filipino rice farmer.

F.I.E.L.D.S. claim that improved rice production and enhanced farmer productivity will raise farmers' incomes or improve household food security and rice consumption, but it is argued here that those are not the intended and "strategic" goals

⁶ The inputs sector in rice is composed of fertilizer, agro-chemicals and seeds and their importers, distributors, repackers, exporters and manufacturers. Included in the inputs are tractors and equipments. Both domestic and world markets in inputs are integrated.

⁷ Between farmers and millers there are also consolidators, commission agents, independent traders and others.

⁸ The NFA's roles include procurement and distribution of rice and stabilization of retail prices. It is also the sole government agency given the mandate to import rice. Tolentino and de la Pena (2012) noted that there are also lobby groups tied to the NFA such as the NFA Employee's Association, the various service providers to NFA, financial institutions that lend to NFA, as well as a corruption network with ties to local political elites.

of the Program, rather, F.I.E.L.D.S. is mainly concerned with the supply of rice. In a succeeding section here, it is also argued here that even the goal of farmer productivity is in fact secondary, almost like an afterthought or a convenient excuse or justification for the program's ultimate goal which is increased rice production.

Related to income is the issue of consumption. Though not explicitly mentioned in the plan, it is argued here that consumption is the Program's barometer for the poverty of farmers. The argument is that farmer households are poor as determined by their inability to consume the rice they need because of their income. But as scholars and the UN has pointed out, income and consumption are just one aspect of poverty. Missing in F.I.E.L.D.S. is not only an acknowledgement that, as per official records, there is historical and consistent poverty in the agriculture sector and among farmers, and that there are political reasons as to the persistence of hunger and poverty, like the poor implementation of the CARP which is meant to distribute land. F.I.E.L.D.S. does not account for the complexity of either general poverty in the Philippines or the particular poverty experienced by farming and agricultural households. Instead it takes a limited approach to poverty based on income and consumption. The masterplan simply says low income is a reflection of low levels of productivity. It only provides a calculus for the supposed "incremental income" (PhilRice, 2009, pp. 60-62) farmers will eventually gain through seed subsidies and use of certified seeds

Both AO 225 and AO 225-A also mention "uplift[ing] the poor". The AO 225 puts to task the National Anti-Poverty Commission to "oversee the implementation" of the executive order and to "validate" if the poor actually benefits from the government's "pro-poor projects." Both administrative orders do not actually mention hunger but it is implied that the poor will benefit from boosting rice supply and cushioning the country from price spikes. EO 725, on the other hand, does not specifically mention poverty or hunger but under the sections on "Rice Management" and "Distribution", it notes to "make sure distribution of rice gets to the people who need it most, efficiently and cost-effectively".

While F.I.E.L.D.S. talks about food security of the household, it does not say anything at all about the complexity of hunger in the country or the high incidence of hunger among farmer and agricultural households. F.I.E.L.D.S. simply assumes that

rise in the income of rice farmers – through increased yields, and the development of their capabilities – will lead to household food security and improved consumption which are key to addressing (general and specific) poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity. The Program raised the need for “congruent and rural-based policy reforms and instruments to ensure food security and alleviate poverty” (PhilRice, 2009, p.15), however, what is significantly missing is a reference to the government’s Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program (AHMP). AHMP is worth mentioning here not only because of the 2008 global food price crisis but because one of its components is distribution upland land meant exclusively for cultivating jathropha, a kind of agrofuel.

4.4 The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program’s Food Framework

The Philippine Rice Masterplan declares rice self-sufficiency as the country’s goal in order to ensure the accessibility and affordability of rice to all, F.I.E.L.D.S.’ use of “food self-sufficiency” may at first appear to be misleading or confusing but it makes more sense following Clapp’s (2017) nuanced approach. Citing the 2008 spikes in the price of rice and farm inputs, the masterplan boldly declares “importation is no longer an option to address the rice shortage” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 15). The main goal of the program was about improving rice productivity. As used in F.I.E.L.D.S., food self-sufficiency, or rice self sufficiency, revolves mainly around the question of the availability of rice. The Program talks about securing a level of rice supply in the country for local and national consumption.

It should be noted that while the food self-sufficiency rhetoric is used, the government still retains the policy option of trade in foodstuff. The Philippines, after all, cannot avoid trade not only because it is a signatory to the World Trade Organization but because local rice production has not been able to meet domestic demand for a decades. So even though F.I.E.L.D.S. aims for 100% self-sufficiency in rice, and despite grand declarations of no more rice importation at the time, food self-sufficiency, as used by the government, does not entirely mean avoidance of trade. In fact, by the end of Macapagal-Arroyo’s term, news headlines say the country was “swimming in rice” (Cerojano, 2010) due to the massive imports. Even with the goal

of 100% rice self-sufficiency, the government had actually imported more than enough rice by 2010. F.I.E.L.D.S. claims to seek the enhanced profitability of rice farmers, but the program's concern is actually more about the availability of rice in the domestic market than with about upholding the interest and welfare of farmers.

Additionally, the F.I.E.L.D.S. masterplan also uses the phrase food security sometimes in conjunction with food self-sufficiency. The use of food security, however, has nothing to do with fulfilling the state's human rights obligations but more to do with achieving a sustainable or stable supply of domestically-grown rice ready for the market. The masterplan's strategies will not only supposedly result to enhanced profitability for farmers but "improve household food security and consumption" (PhilRice, 2009, p.10). Here food security in F.I.E.L.D.S. takes on an exclusively economic framing wherein it is all about supply and demand economics of rice. The framing is partial only to consumers of rice so that when the masterplan says "enough rice for Filipinos" (PhilRice, 2009, p. 5) what it actually means is that rice – as a food commodity and not part of the right to food – should have a stable supply and be affordable to every consumer including farmers. The use of the term food security touches upon the subcomponents of availability and accessibility but overall, their use is limited only to the logic of economics and the market.

The use of food security in F.I.E.L.D.S. is more akin to the use of the term food self-sufficiency. The focus of the program is more on securing rice as a commodity in the market, and less if nothing to do with securing rice as part of the right to food. When F.I.E.L.D.S. uses food security, it is about the food commodity rather than about people with entitlement to rights and food. However, it should be reiterated that, at the 1996 World Food Summit and the supporting Rome Declaration on World Food Security (FAO, 1996), the primary and most important anchor of the term food security was the people whereby the declaration reaffirmed everyone's right to adequate food and fundamental right to freedom from hunger. Food and its characteristics and qualifiers—sufficiency (availability, accessibility and adequacy), safety, and quality (nutritious to meet dietary needs and food preferences) were important but the focus was still on people. Security in food, as defined by FAO, is primarily about the people's situation relative to food, and less to do with food and its characteristics.

What could possibly explain the misleading use of the terms food self-sufficiency and food security in the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program? The masterplan uses the terms rice self-sufficiency and food security but mainly as political rhetoric especially in the context of the 2008 global food price crisis. Aside from the global food price crisis and the spike in fuel prices, the Macapagal-Arroyo administration at the time had to deal with the global financial crisis as well as growing public distrust and skepticism owing to several controversies including the Fertilizer Fund Scam of 2004. The terms rice self-sufficiency and food security, in a way, appease Filipinos into thinking that the government is genuinely concerned about upholding everyone's interest especially in food and rice security.

Another important and perhaps major explanation as to the misleading use of food self-sufficiency and food security involves the integration of the Philippine economy into the global economy. The Philippines had undergone massive macroeconomic structural adjustments under the IMF and World Bank which has resulted to neglect and stagnation in the agriculture sector and very low income for farmers. Additionally, the country, being a signatory to the World Trade Organization and the Agreement on Agriculture, has had to comply with full trade liberalization commitments including the removal of import restrictions on rice. The government knows full well how integrated the country is in the global economy and the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program – despite its focus on rice self-sufficiency – is advocating for the growth of the rice market and for the global competitiveness of the Filipino rice farmer. The masterplan's self-sufficiency framework has nothing to do with being closed off from the international market or protecting Filipinos from the harmful effects of global economic integration such as the 2008 global food price crisis. On the contrary, F.I.E.L.D.S. actually argues for the Philippine rice sector and of the Filipino rice farmer to fully and effectively participate in the global food market.

4.5 The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program and the Right to Food

At the onset it must be said that the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program does not explicitly mention phrases such as “rights”, “right to food”, or “freedom from hunger”. The language used by the program and the masterplan is mostly economic and

technical (i.e., “supply”, “demand”, “productivity”, “growth”, “package of interventions”, etc.). However, even though F.I.E.L.D.S. does not use human rights language, it can be argued that at the minimum they reflect aspects of the right to food. This section uses the international norms and standards on the right to food to analyze F.I.E.L.D.’s implications on addressing hunger and poverty.

4.5.1 Normative Content of the Right to Food and F.I.E.L.D.S.

The normative content on the right to food most relevant to the F.I.E.L.D.S. program, though in a rather limited manner, are ‘availability’, ‘accessibility’, and adequacy. Sections 2 and 4 of Executive Order No. 725 talked about “the response to the issue of rice management shall be based on three fundamental needs”, namely, a) guaranteed supply; b) the efficient and cost-effective distribution of rice to the people who need it most; and c) vigilance so that unscrupulous traders do not price gouge and exploit the situation. In formulating the rice management framework around the aforementioned “needs”, it can be argued that the normative content on availability, accessibility, and adequacy were, at the very least, acknowledged.

While the program’s overall focus, as stipulated in EO 725, was the adoption of “measures to meet the challenge of the current world rice supply shortage,” the strategy can be considered as mainly skewed towards availability of supply given the objectives of raising production and productivity in rice. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defined availability in Paragraph 12 of General Comment No 12 as referring to “the possibilities either for feeding oneself directly from productive land or other natural resources, or for well-functioning distribution, processing and market systems that can move food from the site of production to where it is needed in accordance with demand” (CESCR, 1999). While F.I.E.L.D.S. mentions the need to “ensure rice is accessible and affordable to all Filipinos”, the program’s main goal is to achieve rice self-sufficiency in 2013 through a) “sustainable rice production”, b) enhanced provincial rice self-sufficiency via the creation and implementation of a local rice plan, and c) development of farmer’s capacity in order to increase rice yield and income. Missing in the ‘availability’ framework of F.I.E.L.D.S. is the possibility of “feeding oneself directly from

productive land or other natural resources”. F.I.E.L.D.S. has a bias towards the market’s ability to address all the food needs of the farmer—the supply and affordability of rice and other foodstuffs.

The masterplan also addressed, and in a similarly narrow way, the normative content on ‘accessibility’, or specifically, ‘economic accessibility’. EO 725 talked about “efficient and cost-effective” distribution of rice to those “who need it most”. The formulation of “those who need it most” is somewhat inexact or vague relative to the formulation of Paragraph 13 of the General Comment No. 12 which states that “socially vulnerable groups such as landless persons and other particularly impoverished segments of the population may need attention through special programmes” (CESCR, 1999). Similar to its approach on availability, F.I.E.L.D.S. does not say anything about the rice needs of socially vulnerable groups such as farmers. Even though it says, “enough rice for Filipinos”, implicit within F.I.E.L.D.S. is the idea that only those who have money or income, only those who can afford rice are the one who can actually have access to rice.

The normative content of *adequacy* can also be gleaned from thrust of the program which was “to meet the challenge of the current world rice supply shortage” (EO 725). Adequacy can also be assumed given how the F.I.E.L.D.S. program uses the phrase ‘self-sufficiency’. It should be emphasized however, that the program’s formulation is somewhat reactionary, short-sighted, and misleading. It is reactionary and short-sighted as the program is mostly in response to the (short-term) 2008 rice price crisis, and less, if at all, about the global food crisis phenomenon that has been happening in the last 30 years. The program uses the phrases “rice self-sufficiency” and “food self-sufficiency” but these are not human rights terms. F.I.E.L.D.S. does not talk about the right to food, but through its rice self-sufficiency goal, one can glean and interpret that elements of the normative content on adequacy are there.

Adequacy of food covers the following: a) “availability of food in quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances, and acceptable within a given culture”; and b) “accessibility of food in ways that are sustainable and that do not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights” (CESCR, 1999). From these parameters of adequacy, it can be argued that the F.I.E.L.D.S. program – despite its limited focus to rice as a food – would satisfy both

availability and accessibility. However, with the program's emphasis on the use of hybrid seeds and organic fertilizers, the idea of food being free from adverse substances is put to question. Hybrid varieties of rice mean that these have been genetically modified so as to be resistant to pests and other elements, or to produce more, but there is no guarantee that these modifications are ultimately good for human consumption. The idea on sustainability in access (to rice) is also questionable in F.I.E.L.D.S. Arguably the program only covers the years 2009 to 2013 therefore, the program does not answer the food needs of Filipinos beyond 2013.

4.5.2 State Obligations and Other Standards on the Right Food and F.I.E.L.D.S.

The three main state obligations under the right to food are: a) *respect*, b) *protect*, and c) *fulfill*. The obligation to fulfill covers the obligations to *facilitate*, to *promote*, and to *provide*. Additionally, there is an *extraterritorial obligation* pertaining to the right to food, and the principle of *progressive realization*. How does F.I.E.L.D.S. contribute to fulfilling the aforementioned state obligations?

Obligation to Respect

Paragraph 15 of General Comment No. 12 emphasizes that the obligation to respect means that the state does not undertake any measures that will infringe on anyone's right to access food. Access to food entails not just economic access but also physical access. As mentioned earlier, the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program has a narrow framing or appreciation of accessibility since it only covers economic accessibility and makes no mention of physical accessibility. F.I.E.L.D.S. mentions of a rise in the farmer's income as a result of increased production and enhanced productivity in rice, however, income from farm work alone is not enough to fulfill access to food. We have to reiterate that the root of the hunger and poverty problem of farmers around the world stems primarily from lack of access to productive means to grow food (Sen, 1981; Künnemann, 1999; De Schutter, 2009; UNOHCHR, 2010). If a farmer does not have income to access food, they must have access to land in order to have physical access to food. Unfortunately, neither access to land nor physical access to food is addressed in the rice self-sufficiency framework of F.I.E.L.D.S.

Obligation to Protect

The obligation to protect simply means that the state should ensure that no third party infringes on anyone's access to adequate food. Under the heading of rice management framework, Section 2.3 of EO 725 declared that there is a need "to be vigilant that unscrupulous traders do not price gouge and exploit the situation." The same statement was invoked and strengthened under Section 5, on Enforcement. From these we can argue that the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program – while mainly focusing on rice production and raising productivity – acknowledges the need to protect rice consumers from traders who may impinge on their access to rice. Here F.I.E.L.D.S. is not referring to the right to food as a whole or to those vulnerable to hunger or to violation of their right to food (i.e. farmers). It is referring to the economic access (to buy) aspect of the right to food, and to those who can buy food (the rice consumer). So, in effect, the government-state here is only interested in protecting economic access to food and the consumers who have economic access to rice.

Obligation to Fulfil

The state obligation to *fulfil* – which includes the obligations to facilitate and to provide – means that the state must not only constantly engage in strengthening people's access to resources and means to ensure their livelihood, but also to directly provide food for those who, beyond their control, are unable to enjoy the right to food.

Executive Order (EO) No. 725 mentioned that "the first obligation and commitment of government is to put food on the table in the Philippines". However, this is mainly rhetoric as the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program's aim is not to provide food or rice assistance to Filipinos but to increase rice production and achieve rice self-sufficiency.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program supports both state obligations to *facilitate* and to *promote* given the interventions on technologies, credit, loans, extension, and other support services for the farmer's improved productivity and increased rice yield. On a theoretical level, the program supports the farmers' livelihood as it claims that "increasing the yield of farmers accompanied by higher level of prices translates to higher farm income" (PhilRice, 2009, p.10).

While the masterplan talked about sources of growth—yield and area, as well as “increased income of marginalized rice farmers and landless farm workers” (PhilRice, 2009, p.18), there was no mention, however, about farmers’ access to and use of land, nor about the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program of the government. The plan kept mentioning about farmers adopting technologies to increase yield and enhance productivity but it was silent on the issue that many Filipino farmers still do not have access to land.

Progressive Realization of the Right to Food in F.I.E.L.D.S.

Under the principle of *progressive realization* it is the state’s obligation to “move as expeditiously as possible” (CESCR, 1999) towards the full realization of the right to food. It can be argued that the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program, together with the supplemental EO 725, Administrative Order No. 225, AO No. 225-A, Department of Agriculture Administrative Order No.23 (hereinafter DA-AO23), and Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the League of Provinces in the Philippines (TLPP), are steps of the Philippine government to fulfill this obligation. As mentioned earlier, F.I.E.L.D.S. is a reaction to the world food price crisis that began in 2007. However, it should be pointed out that the masterplan is framed particularly within economic terms and not in human rights terms. The plan addresses only a portion of the right to food—availability, economic accessibility and adequacy. Full realization of the right to food is not limited to the three aforementioned norms.

State Obligations with International Dimensions on the Right to Food and F.I.E.L.D.S.

EO 725 mentions that “the rise of agricultural prices is a global problem and all must work together to resolve it and to help prevent any global food crisis in the longer term”. Furthermore, in Section 3.1, on the issue of Supply, EO 725 called for “reaching out to Thailand and Vietnam and others to increase the national security stock, and seek the advice of those with actual experience and specialization in the commodity and its free market”. These may imply the fulfillment of State obligation

towards international cooperation for the realization of socio-economic rights, as set out in articles 1.2, 11, and 23 of the ICESCR.

On the other hand, one of the masterplan's stated objectives for achieving rice self-sufficiency was to "significantly reduce, if not stop, rice importation in 2013" (PhilRice, 2009, p. 18).

Two things should be pointed out here: first, the F.I.E.L.D.S. program is a plan for increasing rice productivity and not for realizing the right to food of Filipino farmers; and second, reaching out to neighboring rice-producing countries is in the context, not of fulfilling the obligation for international cooperation within the context of realizing the right to food, but of stabilizing the supply and price of rice for domestic consumption.

Human Rights Principles—(FAO) P.A.N.T.H.E.R. Framework and F.I.E.L.D.S.

The human rights principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and rule of law or P.A.N.T.H.E.R. framework formulated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a set of seven human rights principles used to address the right to adequate food. It is soft law but the principles are derived from the various treaties on human rights. According to the FAO, the PANTHER principles "contribute to strengthening relevant public institutions and coordination mechanisms with regard to implementation as well as integrate partners such as civil society organizations, human rights commissions, parliamentarians and government sectors" (FAO, 2016).

Are the PANTHER Human Rights Principles present in F.I.E.L.D.S.? From the beginning this study pointed out that F.I.E.L.D.S. does not explicitly mention human rights but that ideas or language related to human rights are used within the program. The following paragraphs are evidence of this. First, two of the identified objectives for achieving rice self-sufficiency in the masterplan are: a) "enhance small farmers' self-reliance" (PhilRice, 2009, p.18) and b) "organize and empower small farmers in deciding and implementing local rice master plans in their respective municipalities and provinces" (PhilRice, 2009, p.18). The masterplan mentioned the

conduct of a “participatory rural appraisal” to ensure that Integrated Crop Management (ICM) will effectively respond to specific production constraints.

Under the intervention of ‘Extension, Capacity-enhancement and Information Campaign’, the masterplan noted the need to “outmode the dole-out mentality” of farmers and change it with “project ownership and accountability through consultation, consensual negotiation, and transparent communication” (PhilRice, 2009p.36). Mentioned as well was that farmers’ education and training need to be “developed through a bottom-up-top-down cyclical process (farmer consultation, participatory planning, and design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation cycle)” (PhilRice, 2009, p.36).

However, the masterplan also talked about farmers’ “conscientization on the vicious poverty cycle that has long entrapped them” and that “the cycle starts with their farms’ low productivity resulting from varied influencing factors, such as their [farmers’] hesitance or non-adoption of environment-friendly, cost-saving, integrated farming technologies, and non-use of hybrid, certified rice seeds, among others” (PhilRice, 2009, p.37). The masterplan continued that if farmers can “reflect and aspire for liberation and freedom from this poverty trap” then “their involvement in this Plan’s projects and activities will be motivated by their internal drive and aspiration for a better and improved life” (PhilRice, 2009, p.37). The goal is to make the farmers “hands-on professional farmers in the long run” (PhilRice, 2009, p.37).

The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program is not a plan to support the human rights of farmers but a productivity masterplan that borrows heavily on old-style management which places strong emphasis on hierarchy and authority or expertise (see Figure 11). While the masterplan has used words like “empowerment”, “participation”, or “conscientization”, or it has claimed that improving the farmers’ income as a secondary goal, it is highly questionable whether the program actually sees farmers as either equal partners or at the heart of the plan.

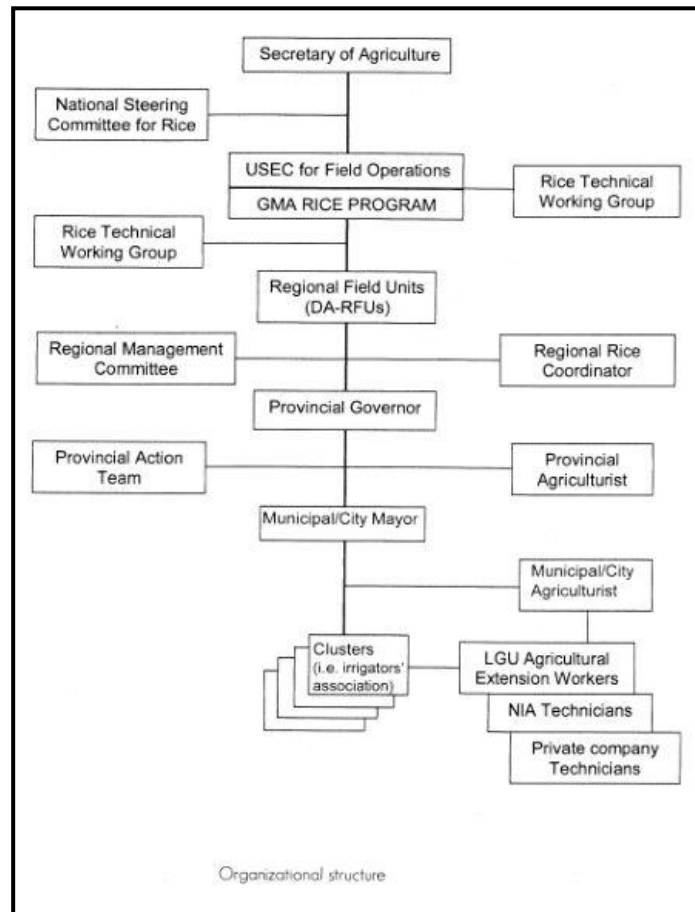


Figure 4.2 Organizational Structure for the Implementation of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program

The question on whether F.I.E.L.D.S. empowers farmers is most relevant in the intervention on seeds. The plan did not specify which varieties of seeds are promoted however one report revealed that the seeds are “a combination of publicly developed hybrids such as M1, M3, M7 developed by PhilRice, as well as privately developed hybrids like Bigante (Bayer), SL-8 (SL Agritech), Rizalina 28 (HyRice) and Bioseed 401 (Bioseed)” (GRAIN, 2008). David (2006), in her study on the government’s hybrid rice program pointed out that the hybrid varieties need to be purchased every cropping season” (2006, p.vi). She also recommended phasing the system of subsidies for these hybrid seeds as they are all private goods. Manaytay (2008) on the question whether F.I.E.L.D.S. benefits farmers pointed out that hybrid seeds “only perpetuate[s] the control of seed companies” (2008). So when F.I.E.L.D.S. uses the rhetoric of empowering farmers, when it comes to seeds, it actually does the

opposite. With the emphasis on the farmer's use of hybrid seeds – developed by the private sector – the one's empowered are not the farmers but the seed companies. The use of these hybrid seeds subjects the farmers to an unsustainable and costly dependency on the technology and those who provide them. Here we are reminded of the wisdom of the warrior against genetically modified organisms, Vanda Shiva, who said “when you control seed, you control food” (Shiva cited in: Moyers, 2012).

Under the component of Extension, F.I.E.L.D.S. raised the need for local government officials to “effect change in their extension staffs' work ethics by sincerely and consistently modeling integrity and accountability in public service” (PhilRice, 2009, p.35). Here it is worth mentioning that the Department of Agriculture has consistently been among the most corrupt agencies in government.⁹ At the time the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program was still implemented, agencies such as the National Food Authority, National Irrigation Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, and Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority were still attached to the DA. In 2010, during the term of President Benigno S. Aquino III, the four agencies placed under the Office of the President especially when the DA was embroiled in the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) scam which had taken place between 2003 and 2013. The PDAF scam is related to the Fertilizer Fund scam of 2004 under the administration of Macapagal-Arroyo.

4.6 The F.I.E.L.D.S. Program and Neoliberalism

It is argued here that F.I.E.L.D.S. generally satisfies and fits well with Harvey's (2005) description of neoliberalism. Furthermore, following Soss, Fording and Schram's (2009) ideas, there is no doubt that F.I.E.L.D.S. embodies neoliberal paternalism. In this section, the components of Harvey's neoliberalism description will be thoroughly discussed first in relation to F.I.E.L.D.S., then followed by a discussion of the neoliberal paternalist of the rice self-sufficiency program. The succeeding discussions will revolve mainly around how F.I.E.L.D.S. looks at small farmers and their situation.

⁹ See Sarmiento (2000) and World Bank (2001).

Aside from achieving 100% self-sufficiency in rice, the other goal identified by the masterplan involves “developing farmers’ capacity to increase yield and income” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 17). The plan also identified, as one of its objectives, the enhancement of small farmers’ “self-reliance” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 18). Additionally, within the Extension, Capacity-Enhancement, and Information Campaign component, the masterplan suggested that “efforts must be made to outmode the dole-out mentality of majority of Filipino farmers” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 36). Additionally, the plan identified “media consciousness-raising interventions” to inform farmers about “food shortage resulting from high population growth rate, global and national economic factors, climate change and other unpredicted factors” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 36). Lastly, the masterplan emphasized the importance of farmers’ “conscientization (awareness-reflection-action-process)” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 37). According to the plan, farmers must not only be “made to realize the vicious poverty cycle that has long entrapped them” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 37) but that they can “reflect and aspire for liberation and freedom from this poverty” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 37). Through the help of technicians and science-based farming practices, the masterplan shall make the farmers “hands-on professionals in the long run” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 37). The capacity enhancement component of F.I.E.L.D.S. means that farmers will be trained and provided technical assistance and technology demonstrations.

According to Harvey (2005) one of neoliberalism’s goals involves “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p.2). While liberty or freedom is shared both classical liberalism and neoliberalism, it is argued here that when F.I.E.L.D.S. talks about liberating the Filipino farmer from poverty and their entrepreneurial skills, it is within the neoliberal framework. F.I.E.L.D.S. emphasis on enhancing the farmer’s profitability and on conscientizing them to aim for “liberation and freedom” from the supposed vicious poverty cycle entrapping them are all geared towards the growth of the rice sector and the rice market. F.I.E.L.D.S. takes on a neoliberal framework because it gives primacy to the market as the solution to the poverty and malnutrition of Filipinos. The Program does not recognize poverty, hunger or food insecurity as political questions needing political answers. Instead, for F.I.E.L.D.S., these problems can be solved by the

economics and market of rice. As a program of the state, the interventions identified in F.I.E.L.D.S. (i.e. use of certified/hybrid seeds and other technologies, seed subsidy and credit assistance) are all meant to strengthen market mechanisms that will supposedly address poverty and hunger.

F.I.E.L.D.S. stresses that the poverty cycle starts from the “farm’s low productivity” which is a combination of various factors particularly the farmer’s “hesitance or non-adoption, or non-use of integrated farming technologies, and hybrid, certified rice seeds” (PhilRice, 2009, p.38). One of F.I.E.L.D.S.’ goals is to “develop farmers capacity to increase rice yield and income” (PhilRice, 2009, p.17). This will be accomplished by a) “augment[ing] rice farming household income through increases in rice yield and integrated rice-based farming systems” (PhilRice, 2009, p.18), b) “enhanc[ing] small farmers’ self-reliance” (PhilRice, 2009, p.18), and c) “organiz[ing] and empower[ing] small farmers in deciding and implementing local rice master plans” (PhilRice, 2009, p.18). True to its neoliberal and paternalist leanings, F.I.E.L.D.S. argues that the rice farmer’s poverty is not the result of external and socio-political factors – income and wealth inequality, lack of access to land and other productive resources, state neglect of the agriculture sector and continued support for neoliberal economic policies, corruption in government, or predominance of elite politics – rather, it is internal and personal-private to the farmer. According to the plan, poverty is rooted in the farmer’s inability to be productive which is mainly due to their hesitance or non-adoption of the technologies and inputs that government promotes. Poverty, therefore, is simply the result of wrong choices and poor decision-making on the part of the farmer. The solution to the farmer’s poverty, according to the plan, is to improve rice productivity which can be done achieved by the farmer a) realizing the supposed poverty trap, b) aspiring for liberation and freedom from the “self-induced poverty”, and finally, c) becoming a “hands-on professional farmer” by adopting and using what the program calls as “science-based” inputs and practices.

Related to the earlier discussion on the “privatization of poverty” is neoliberalism’s value for individual responsibility and self-discipline as the essential condition for freedom. There is a “moral and political obligation to act as disciplined entrepreneurs, planning to meet their own needs, accepting personal responsibility for their problems, and managing their daily affairs with prudence” (Soss, Fording and

Schram, 2009, p. 4). With regards to consciousness-raising, F.I.E.L.D.S. stressed the need to “outmode the dole-out mentality” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 36) of farmers and to replace it with “project ownership and accountability” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 36). This is part of the masterplan’s specific objectives on “enhance[ing] small farmers’ self-reliance” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 18). Within a neoliberal framework, F.I.E.L.D.S. wants the Filipino farmer to be a “good citizen” (Soss, Fording and Schram, 2009, p. 4) which is another term for being a “competent and self-reliant market actor” (Soss, Fording and Schram, 2009, p. 4).

On the neoliberal element of “an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights” (Harvey, 2005, p.2), as has been mentioned previously, the program does not actually mention anything about the access to land of farmers or the landless. As part of the context to F.I.E.L.D.S., the masterplan briefly mentioned that rice lands have been lost in favor of industrial, residential and commercial purposes among others. The program however is silent on the completion of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and how full government support and extension services for CARP beneficiaries can contribute to effective poverty reduction, to rise in rural household income, and to the attainment of food security in the country. F.I.E.L.D.S. is also silent on the issue of land grabbing¹⁰ that had picked up pace at the time as part of the global food price crisis. The Philippine state apparently was more interested in promoting the private property rights of elites and investors. FOCUS (2015) revealed that some irrigated rice lands were in fact converted for agrofuel plantation as part of land deals and agroinvestments signed during the Macapagal-Arroyo administration. As mentioned previously, one of AHMP’s hunger mitigation strategies was ironically the distribution of upland lands for the exclusive cultivation of *jathropa*, an agrofuel. All these took place even while F.I.E.L.D.S. aimed for 100% rice self-sufficient by improving production.

One possible strong proof F.I.E.L.D.S. does not actually support the private property rights of small farmers can be found within its component on Credit

¹⁰ Among the actors involved in land-grabbing in the Philippines include national economic elites, rural elites and landlords, government officials, and neoliberal economists and technocrats. See Focus on the Global South (FOCUS), 2015. Understanding Land Grabbing, Land Rights in the 21st Century. *Policy Review*, January-June, 1: 6. [Online] Available at: http://focusweb.org/sites/www.focusweb.org/files/PolicyReview2015_Understanding%20Land%20Rights_Land%20Grabbing_21stCentury.pdf [Accessed 20 October 2015].

Assistance. A total of PHP 20 billion worth of loans and credit are available to farmers, fisherfolk and other rural borrowers, but “farmers can use their land as collateral for bank loans” (PhilRice, 2009, p.39). If F.I.E.L.D.S. is interested in improving the productivity of the farmer and lifting them out of poverty, why would the government encourage such a policy? Given the limited government support for farmers, and the geo-climatic risks related to rice farming, it is in fact quite dangerous and contrary to the farmer’s interest to put their land as collateral for loans. If a farmer loses their land due to bad weather or failed harvest, for example, how would they continue to be productive without their land?

Neoliberalism emphasizes the primacy of the logic of the market so that the state is both mobilized along market agendas and reconfigured along market terms (Soss, Fording and Schram, 2009, p. 2). Unlike in classical liberal economics where the state is prohibited from intervening in the market, neoliberalism, on the other hand, allows for the state to play some role, but only in so far as to protect the interests of the market. Some of the roles the state plays for the market include “serving and subsidizing market actors, enhancing profitability, stabilizing market disruptions, absorbing market losses, and expanding the scope of market relations and opportunities” (Soss, Fording and Schram, 2009, p. 3). The Rice Masterplan clearly reflects this when it says “policy and institutional reforms are crucial to the significant growth of the rice sector” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 10). The plan mentions that domestic policy reforms should be in place to facilitate “investment on productivity-enhancing support services and infrastructure” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 10), thus the F.I.E.L.D.S. strategic interventions on the Integrated Crop Management System, the use of so-called certified seeds and the seed subsidy system, and capacity enhancement to name a few. Lastly F.I.E.L.D.S. talks about various kinds of reforms to “enhance the efficacy of rice markets and provide improved access to rice technologies” (PhilRice, 2009, p. 10). The Philippine government (as representative of the state) becomes the “guarantor or referee of market rights” (Johnson and Start, 2001, p. 22).

The above is also tied to neoliberalism’s caution against state intervention in the market for doing so prevents powerful groups from distorting and biasing interventions for their own benefit. Here it is worth mentioning the National Food Authority (NFA), the main agency that F.I.E.L.D.S. identified for its specific

intervention on Marketing Assistance. The NFA is also the state agency that has a monopoly over rice importation in the country. This power of the NFA has been a source of corruption. Even though some scholars have disputed¹¹ the idea of an existing rice cartel in the Philippines, news reports provide some idea as to the corruption and collusion that takes place between private individuals (rice traders) and public officials from the NFA.¹² One news report claims that between 2008 and 2012 around 272 private rice importers were able to get tax exemptions even if by law, the NFA is the only rice importing body that should be given tax exemptions (GMA News, 2014a). Other news reports reveal that with the help of officials from the NFA, rice traders are able to profit from importation of quantities of (sub-standard) rice (ABS-CBN News, 2010). When neoliberalism argues for minimal state intervention in the market so as to prevent powerful groups from taking advantage of the system, it misses the point that corruption has, in many ways, become a kind of survival mechanism for government officials. Both state and non-state actors benefit from such a structure leaving farmers and consumers on the losing end.

4.7 Summary and Conclusion

Food security is the main problem that the F.I.E.L.D.S. program seeks to address, and the simple solution is rice self-sufficiency or the phenomenon where there is stable supply and demand for rice in the local market. The Philippines needs to be food secure and to be rice self-sufficient, so the strategy is to increase rice production and to improve the rice farmer's productivity. The program's interventions are mostly focused on the farmer who has to be trained, to be made aware (conscientized) of the vicious cycle of poverty, and to be convinced of adopting technologies. The F.I.E.L.D.S. program's framework on food security framework is inadequate or totally inappropriate to addressing both the poverty and hunger of farmers because what it addresses is simply the supply or availability of food and not

¹¹ See Briones, R.M. and Dela Pena, B., 2015. Competition Reform in the Philippine Rice Sector. *PIDS Discussion Paper Series*, 2015-04.

¹² See GMA News, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; ABS-CBN News, 2010. News reports in Filipino talking - about the "Big Seven" rice cartel from the 1990s as still active in rice importation; and rice importation scam—how private traders and individuals are able to import and avail of the tax exemption.

the root causes of the farmers' plight—particularly access to land and other productive means.

The fundamental right to freedom from hunger and the right to adequate food are mainly legal arguments for one – or in community with others – to feed oneself in dignity, and not for one to be fed. In this sense, the combined rights to food can be seen as supportive of individual rights. Ideas on agency and “self-reliance” can be considered to fit well here. However, the fulfillment of the aforementioned rights for farmers must start with the recognition that the issue at hand is less individualistic but more collective. In order for the state to fulfill its obligations under the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and particular to the right to food, the government must commit to reversing decades of neglect of the agricultural sector and craft and implement policies and programs that will genuinely and significantly reduce poverty in the rural areas and encourage rural development.

Rice as an economic good is the focus of the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program. Rice is not seen in the context of food as part of a right. The program's goals of increasing rice production and raising productivity give the impression that it seeks to address poverty but its real intention is far from that. There is no discussion on hunger in F.I.E.L.D.S. except to say that rice should be available and affordable to all who can afford it. In the logic of the masterplan and the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program rice self-sufficiency actually means having a stable supply of rice that will meet the demand of the domestic market. F.I.E.L.D.S. claims that that increased rice production will lead to rise in the income of farmers and ultimately to better lives for them. However, this is too simplistic and misleading because the farmer is merely a means to an end which is 100% rice self-sufficiency by 2013. So even though the program includes education, technological, and support services for the farmer and agricultural worker, the real and ultimate beneficiaries of the program are the rice consumer and the market. While the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program may use language that resonate with human rights values, overall, it is still a productivity program whose focus is not on fulfillment of rights, but on putting sufficient rice in the market.

Proponents of the neoliberal ideology argue that government or public service can be quite inefficient and ineffective due to its often huge and cumbersome bureaucracy and the prevalence of corrupt practices. They claim that inefficiencies in

service delivery can be avoided and service can be improved through increased role of the market, with greater participation of the private sector participation, and lesser intervention from the government/state. This is the general logic and track that the F.I.E.L.D.S. program follows. Early on in the document it declared that “F.I.E.L.D.S. is a systematic strategy of public and private sector development interventions for rice culture” and that “the rice self-sufficiency program serves as its entry point” (PhilRice, 2009, p.16).

With the program’s focus on the efficiency of the rice market and the growth of the rice sector, it can be argued that F.I.E.L.D.S. reflects aspects of neoliberalism. The program argues that through technological and technical means, the productivity of the rice farmer can be improved, but ultimately, without a strong rice sector and efficient rice market, the farmer will not be able to get higher income. By implication, the rice farmer’s poverty and hunger can be addressed through the market. The role of the Philippine state-government, with regards to the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program, is to ensure that the farmers become efficient and effective at producing rice for the market.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Before we discuss some major conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions let us review what this study is all about. There was a brief period in the late 1970s when the Philippines was able to be rice self-sufficient and to export some of it to neighboring countries. Four decades later – and in comparison to its ASEAN neighbors – reduction in hunger and poverty rates have been rather slow. As per government statistics, 26.3 percent of Filipinos today, mostly from the rural areas, are still living below the poverty line, whereas 12 million Filipinos today do not have sufficient income to feed their families in dignity. Through a critical investigation of a government program on food production – the Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers, and Seeds (F.I.E.L.D.S.) Program as part of the 2009-2013 Philippine Rice Masterplan implemented during the Macapagal-Arroyo administration – this research sought to understand how the government views the problem and the corresponding solution to hunger and to the realization of the right to food. Therefore, the objectives of this thesis are: (1) to identify and analyze the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program’s framework on addressing poverty and hunger, and to determine how much influence neoliberalism has, if at all, on its approaches to poverty and hunger; (2) to examine if and how the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program complies with international norms and standards on the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and right to adequate food, and (3) to determine any influence neoliberalism might have on its compliance.

From documentary research and analysis it is found, among other things that: (a) the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program’s use of the phrases “food self-sufficiency” and of “food security” is misleading—it is all about achieving a certain level of rice for the domestic market; (b) “enough rice for Filipinos”, for the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program, means the availability of rice as a commodity for those for Filipinos who can economically access or buy it; (c) the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program recognizes and promotes the rights of

the rice consumer and the farmer's "market rights" (Johnson and Start, 2001, p. 22), instead of addressing the root causes of the farmer's impoverishment, and empowering the farmer so they are able to claim their rights including the right to feed oneself and one's family in dignity; and lastly, (d) the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program talks about empowering the farmer through their adoption and use of technologies and hybrid seeds, but these actually achieve the opposite—farmers are disempowered as they become dependent on these hybrid seeds and technologies, and further empowers the seed and technology companies who own, manufacture, and sell them.

There are several conclusions we can draw from this research. First, in 2009, the UN Special Rapporteur on Food, Olivier De Schutter had echoed what Amartya Sen said in 1981 regarding the political-economic character of hunger. De Schutter (2009) said that increasing food production will not lead to the alleviation of hunger, and that it is not about the availability of food but the poverty and the inability of the poor to access food. He also rightly pointed to the hunger of small farmers as stemming from a "developmental process" of a historical robbery of their livelihoods (De Schutter, 2009).

The same thing can be said about the poverty and hunger of Filipino farmers. As this research has shown, the poverty and hunger of farmers and other food insecure sectors are products of history and of internal-external forces. This research has shown that since the 1980s there had been declining support for the agricultural sector and a big reason for this is the government's acquiescence to neoliberal economic policies that came as loan conditionalities of multilateral financial institutions (see Section 3.3 Debt and Neoliberal Economic Policies and their Impact on Agriculture and the Right to Food, pages 60-73). There is also the element that from the Corazon Aquino administration, the Philippine government has prioritized the debt and debt servicing all at the expense of much needed support for social services and agriculture. Despite the inclusion of human rights and social justice provisions in the basic law of the land, injustice, inequality and corruption has somewhat been institutionalized resulting to sustained poverty and hunger of a quarter of Filipinos most of who are from rural areas. Due to the poor and uneven implementation of the agrarian reform and land redistribution program over the years, equity and justice for farmer-tenants and the landless have virtually been denied from

them. Corruption, particularly within the departments of agriculture and agrarian reform and in collusion with private individuals and entities, has resulted not only waste of public resources but poor delivery of much-needed services for farmers. All of this is part of the developmental and historical robbery of the livelihood of Filipino farmers.

This study looked at how the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program – an example of an agricultural productivity program of the government – seeks to address hunger and poverty. Using both the international norms and standards on the right to food, and neoliberalism as lenses for investigation, this research has revealed that the government is still stuck in the framework of ‘food availability’ as solution to hunger and poverty. Consistent with a neoliberal thinking, F.I.E.L.D.S. sees the primacy and importance of the market thus the emphasis on “the growth of the rice sector” and “enhancing the efficiency of rice markets”. Finally, even though the F.I.E.L.D.S. Program invokes aspects of human rights language in its plan, at the end of the day, the emphasis is still on rice self-sufficiency and not on rights fulfillment. F.I.E.L.D.S. says “rice, not rights”.

5.2 Recommendations

From the very beginning this study stood on the fact that the Philippines has (a) a serious hunger problem and that (b) there is historical and pervasive poverty and food insecurity among farmers in the country. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented for anyone or any group who wishes to contribute in making significant and lasting change a reality for Filipino farmers.

The first recommendation is that any future government agricultural productivity or food self-sufficiency plan must put the farmer and agricultural worker at its center. Adopting a rights-based approach to any policy or program on food production involves genuinely empowering farmers and enabling them to fully participate in every stage of the policy/program’s process.

Any policy or program on addressing hunger and poverty must be tied to the agenda of rural development. As scholars have pointed out urban poverty is related to rural poverty and the neglect of the agriculture sector and the countryside. In the

case of the Philippines where most of the poor reside in the rural areas, rural development is key to making significant reduction to the poverty rate in the country.

Finally, any policy or program aimed at addressing poverty must be informed by its multidimensional character. Income or lack of income is only one aspect of poverty. Poverty must be seen as tied to the fulfillment of human rights and that the poor are also human beings born free and equal in dignity and rights and the poor are also human.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Using this study as a background, one example of a future action research that can be done involves answering the question of the complementarity of local concepts and practices surrounding social justice and a rights-based approach to addressing poverty and hunger among farmers, agricultural workers, and rural residents. Every group or community would have their own, sometimes unique, set of ideas of what it means to be human, to be part of a community, or to have social justice. Farmers and rural residents can be empowered to claim their rights to food through participatory action research.

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