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**Working Paper**

## Politics, globalization, and food crisis discourse

Economics Discussion Papers, No. 2010-22

**Provided in Cooperation with:**

Kiel Institute for the World Economy – Leibniz Center for Research on Global Economic Challenges

*Suggested Citation:* Esposito Guerrero, Bernard Joseph (2010) : Politics, globalization, and food crisis discourse, Economics Discussion Papers, No. 2010-22, Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW), Kiel

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/39660>

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## Politics, Globalization, and Food Crisis Discourse

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**Abstract** The literature on food security has mainly been focused on causes, effects, and/or the nature of the crisis. However, there have been only a few attempts to understand how the discourse on the subject matter was shaped and is still being shaped at present. Food security is at the intersection of many disciplines, and the factors perpetuating the crisis are largely diverse—population, social inequalities, nutrition and health, power monopolies in the international stage, and giant market drivers, among others. The paper aims at shedding light as to how nations really become food insecure to begin with. The discussion traces the globalization of food security as a product of discursive processes. By putting together and analyzing the factors like world politics, the entry of globalization, shifting trade patterns and even culture—through the years—a better understanding of why the problem came to exist and what it is all about is provided.

**JEL** Q17, P48, N90

**Keywords** Food security; food insecurity; neoliberal globalization; trade; agriculture; political economy

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## **Politics, Globalization, and Food Crisis Discourse**

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### **Introduction**

Food security is at the intersection of many disciplines, and the factors perpetuating the crisis are largely diverse – population, social inequalities, nutrition and health, power monopolies in the international stage, giant market drivers, among others. The issue encompasses not only the daily ability of an individual, a household, and a nation to acquire or produce enough food to eat. Rather, in addressing such concern, importance must also be given in dissecting the inter-temporal duty to seek sustainable food source. Hence, despite cutting across the diversity of cultural preferences for diets, and differences in national productivity abilities, the universality of this need compels nations the task of coordinating and synchronizing economic policies that mainstream food security in their national agenda. In particular, for developing nations like the Philippines, agriculture and food production contributes to a large chunk of national gross product and employment: eloping from the question of food security will render its development agenda pointless because no rational state would accept continuous hunger and structural unemployment to be a feature of its society.

The issue is not only confined within the domain of economics and trade, but also along the lines of politics and power. As the advent of globalization increasingly integrated markets and social organizations, it came with it the opening of new opportunities and challenges for nations in addressing the food security concern. Nations are both coerced and consented to participate in the world market, restructure its economic foundations towards openness and respond to the neoliberal pressures of multilateral organizations while preserving its social contract with its domestic constituency. The government is then obliged to redefine the coordinates of food security in order to successfully manage the political forces surrounding it without neglecting the looming hunger, poverty, and safety concerns.

As has been established, food security cuts across not only economic policies in agriculture but touches on the bigger role of nations, the domestic concerns of its people, and the tides of international relations. This enmeshment in international relations allows us to infer that food security, which is copious of implications and subjects of analysis, can be a theme in international political economy for two reasons: on the one hand, an interdisciplinary approach is only but appropriate in teasing down the politics of production, economic restructuring and policy formulation. On the other, while food is a global concern, it is not immune from the larger dynamics of the interplay of national interests and the pursuit for a

neoliberal world order pushed by globalization and its institutions. Thus, concepts are contested, approaches are debated, and the discourse of the true meaning of food security is still under construction.

This paper attempts to shed light on the question of how food-secure nations are - and can be - in a time of increasing integration and fast flow of goods and services brought about by globalization. The subject is portrayed as a discursive process where its material conditions are reflective of the wider negotiations in meanings that run parallel to the development of a new international economic and political order.

### **The Food Security Debate**

Interestingly, the Philippines today is the largest rice importer in the world. This is despite the fact that the agriculture sector accounts for more than one-third of the total labor force and even rising to nearly one-half if agri-based manufacturing and service sectors are included (Balisacan 2006). More surprisingly, in late-2009, the Philippine government decides that it can no longer rely on international markets to supply its needs, thus concluding contracts to buy 1.5 million tons of rice (Heilbuth 2010). Likewise, episodes of food crises haunt continuously – the most recent was in 2008 when average world wheat prices were 130% above their level a year earlier, soy prices were 87% higher, rice had climbed 74%, and maize was up 31% (Food First 2008). This is still despite the fact that the agricultural sector in the country is viable and was even historically a net foreign exchange earner through agricultural exports in the 1960s (David 2003). Moreover, the global trade mistrusts have forced other countries to resort to other desperate measures: India - under panic buying - is negotiating with Vietnam and Thailand for direct rice transactions despite scarcity of the goods, most of the locals of Pakistan are threatened by the possible deal to lease 200,000 hectares of tillable land to Saudi Arabia for the latter's own consumption, and people in China are alarmed by necessary expansions of rubber, paints and chemical plantations, which made harmful chemicals like lead and mercury, according to the Chinese economist Gao Zhong, enter their water systems, farmlands, and eventually the food chain. This has caused a growth in cancer incidents especially in the Northeastern parts (Heilbuth 2010); food safety is an unavoidable part of the food supply security discourse.

Why and how did we and other previously agrarian countries become food-insecure?

Fundamentally, it rests on the question of what food security really means. On the one hand, food security first emerged in the wake of the 1970s food crisis among specialists and non-government organizations concerned with the shifting of more prime agricultural land in the South from the cultivation of food crops to the cultivation of export crops (Bello 1995). It was feared that this could lead to a situation

whereby the agricultural sector would increasingly become less capable of supplying the population's food needs as it became more integrated into the international market and as production shifted to higher-priced export crops or crop-derivatives such as sugar, coffee, and palm oil (Lappe & Collins 1979).

In the 1980s and 1990s, food security was articulated as a counter-paradigm to the banner of free trade waved by the United States (US) and as a response to their hard lobbying efforts with the European Union (EU) to dump their ever-growing surpluses of grain, dairy, and meat products of third country markets. It was resisted because of the devastating effects for domestic economies, rural life, local culture, and communal structures it posed. As advanced by its proponents, food security meant the ability of a country to produce *most* of its basic food necessities, the survival and economic welfare of peasant producers and the protection of food preferences, and stability of a country from the vagaries of world trade in grain and other foodstuffs (Bello 1995).

On the other end, US officials, in response, advanced the idea that food security should not be conflated with "food self-sufficiency." As US Secretary of Agriculture John Block put it at the start of the Uruguay Round in 1986, the "idea that developing countries should feed themselves is an anachronism from a bygone era. They could better ensure their food security by relying on US agricultural products, which are available, in most cases at lower cost" (Cakes & Caviar 1993)<sup>1</sup>. This is also the definition which World Bank adopts: "the availability and affordability of food to all the citizens in a country. Its essential elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it" (World Bank 1986). This recognizes that food production is important, but also that it could not, by itself, solve the food security problem, particularly at the household level. A country who has no capacity to produce food domestically could still be 'food secure' as long as it possesses the capability to procure its food needs from the world market (Cabanilla 1999).

The contention in frameworks and definitions can be contextualized as a manifestation of the emerging evolution of the international food order. For one, the latter dichotomy between security and self-sufficiency highlights the role of foreign markets that conventional neoclassical economic theory proposes in resolving food security problems. This market remedies the flaws of the autarkic tendencies of food self-sufficiency as it serves both as a source of food imports in times of shortage of domestic

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<sup>1</sup> In the November 1996 World Food Conference in Rome, the US position paper repeated the same theme but went further to say that "the pursuit of higher levels of food self-sufficiency has not been limited to developing countries but they are less able to bear the costs of foregone economic efficiency and, thus, such policies are relatively more damaging to their economies and to food security" (US Contribution 1996).

production and as an important market for agricultural surplus, providing the foreign exchange revenues for other development needs (Cabanilla 1999).

In retrospect, however, food security was not consistently conceived in this manner. The concept changed and evolved parallel to historical developments in international relations. For one, an international food order drawn in the postwar era and sustained towards the end of the Cold War was characterized by, as Hariett Friedmann suggests, the campaign for reliance on US agricultural surplus and international trade. This regime banked not only on the credibility of economic theory but had a specific logic of creating an international regime consistent with the dynamics of postwar accumulation and Cold War politics led by the United States (1982). This order was debased as globalization came, changing the coordinates of the framework of food security. The specifics of legitimization and the outcomes of this conceptual evolution are in itself discursive developments contingent on history, politics, social behavior and particular social setups. The confluence of these elements is our subject of interest.

### **International Food Order in the Postwar**

The 1950s to 1970s was characterized by the tons of grain surpluses sustained by heavy US government subsidies and financing of its domestic agricultural sector through Public Law 480<sup>2</sup> (Friedmann 1982). The same model of production was exported to Europe through reconstruction efforts under the Marshall Plan<sup>3</sup> and consequently developed the same level of output beyond the effective demand of the world market. This competitive advantage realized through the massive subsidy programs of developed countries' government allowed their farmers to dominate a large share of world grain exports by exerting a downward pressure on world prices. Of course, it logically necessitated a policy to dispose such surplus grains. Because the European bloc started functioning along the same modes of production which the US exported to them, new grains markets needed to be opened notably in the underdeveloped world. The US set up a food-aid program to channel surpluses to Third World Countries.

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<sup>2</sup> To dispose of farm surpluses, US instituted Public Law 480 Program which had three components: commercial sales on concessionary terms; famine relief; and food bartered for strategic raw materials. The stated goal was "to increase the consumption of US agricultural commodities in foreign countries, to improve the foreign relations of the US and for other purposes." PL480 was the legislative basis of food aid as the economic aid of US.

<sup>3</sup> In the post-WWII years, the United States also focused on European reconstruction as the key to stabilizing the Western world and securing capitalism. The Marshall Plan was a bilateral transfer of billions of dollars to Europe and Japan, serving US geopolitical goals in the Cold War. It used financial aid to stabilize economic growth and trade to undercut socialist movements and labor militancy and consequently, contain communism.

From the underdeveloped countries' lens, the consolidation of the postwar international food order coincided with the crisis of development faced by Third World nations during this era. A growth strategy favoring import-substitution industrialization (ISI) and industrial replication characterized the postcolonial development plan of these nations. This ushered a new international division of labor: the First World is the food basket of the world, while the Third World included more manufactured goods than raw materials. The transformation was easily bolstered and legitimized following the success of the newly industrializing countries like Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Mexico in adopting industrial growth and ISI as a development strategy.

On the flipside, the low prices and international trade patterns established by the international food order created food import dependence and contributed to agricultural underdevelopment in the Third World. Poor peasant farmers obviously cannot compete with the prices of the West. Agriculture in turn lost its productive opportunity and has become a highly unprofitable source of employment. Peasants were displaced, and entered the casual labor force which constituted the characteristic urban unemployment, planet of slums and low-wage economy in these countries. The situation has been made worse by the phenomenon that rice and grain yield growth is obviously slower than countries' population growth. For governments, it was cheaper and easier to import wheat and feed their burgeoning populations than to retract long-term improvements and internationally-funded development initiatives. The cheap food from the West supported consumer purchasing power and subsidized the cost of labor, stabilizing urban politics and improving the Third World environment for industrial investments. Across the Third World, wheat importing rose from a base of practically zero in the mid-1950s to almost half of world food imports in 1971. The once self-sufficient economies now had a register of rising *per capita* wheat consumption, “modernizing” traditional “peasant food” and replacing it with new wage foods of grains and processed foods consumed by urban workers (McMichael 2007).

Third World Agriculture did not completely dissipate. Instead, it witnessed the conversion from the cultivation of subsistence and essential crops (rice, corn) to cash and high-value crops (coffee, biofuels, etc.). Surplus grain was sufficiently cheap and plentiful also to feed livestock. A global livestock complex emerged where for instance, Central American rainforests were converted to pasture for cattle which were, in turn, converted into hamburgers for an expanding fast-food industry in the United States (McMichael 2007).

Note, however, that in this era aid was not dispensed nor was gain trade conducted only on the basis of profitability and the standards of market efficiency. At that time up to the Vietnam War, it was dispensed

with a discriminating eye for building international alliances. The food aid program was part of a project of reconstructing a world market with the US economy as the center. American food aid dispensed judiciously to Poland and Yugoslavia was intended both to corrode economic ties within the Soviet bloc and to underscore the relative success of capitalist agriculture (Friedmann 1982). The penetration of previously self-sufficient agrarian societies was a conscious effort to incorporate them within the market economy and define sharply the barriers between the East and West, which in turn strengthened the boundaries of the open order as the free world (Block 1977). Clearly, geostrategic interests tempered economic restructuring and conditioned the Western campaign for free trade. The South Korean example of this case is telling.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Rise of Globalization**

Come the era of globalization and the end of the Cold War, the crisis of development broke down as the consensus on its viability and credibility withered away. Propelled by international financial and capital mobility based on the huge material power of transnational corporations and banks, the options for the debt-riddled developing nations - in terms of its agriculture and food security - began being embedded in the network and rapid changes that globalization introduced and enforced. Nations were enjoined in a system and a framework of multilateral governance that co-authored a system of rules to favor a global market order where world market participation and integration is now the pathway out of poverty, hunger and debt.

The discourse evolved and transcended the quasi-colonial set-up fostered by the international post-war food order and division of labor. Globalization introduced a structural turning point premised on perpetuating the ideology of neoliberalism. In the previous period the model espoused a nationalist ethic of replicating Western models of industrialization towards growth. Globalization, on the other hand, has supported the neoliberal idea of a globally managed growth. It constructed an integrated global division of labor where countries must specialize and find their niche in the global market in turn abandoning self-sufficiency productions to maximize the opportunities of comparative advantage.

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<sup>4</sup> The South Korean economic miracle relied not only on the injection of American dollars following the Korean War in the early 1950s as it pursued the ISI strategy and its key access to US markets for its manufactured exports. The cheap US exports of wheat were also very crucial. South Koreans do not consume Western-style bread before 1960s and was self-sufficient. Yet by 1978, it was purchasing \$2.5 billion worth of American farm commodities particularly wheat in order to lower wage cost and support the displacement of its farmers to the working sector. This illustrates that the miracle was not ultimately a domestic process only but had a significant international dimension that anchored and complemented its transformation (Chung, Evans, Harris & Wessel in McMichael 2007).



This far-reaching neoliberal shift brought about by globalization was also marked by the transformation of modes of governance from state-managed prosperity to the elevated power of market rule. Whereas development implied a national public sector to regulate the market and its outcomes, globalism seeks to discard or weaken the public welfare function in order to enthrone the logic of the market (McMichael 2000). It temporarily punctuates the battle of ideas between Keynesian state-led development and private sector-managed growth as the ruler of the commanding heights of the economy (Yergin 2002). Consequently, the options for social and economic policy making are narrowed as states are pressured to retract and allow the market to function on its own signals. Neoliberalism reflects the unifying assumption of classical liberalism, namely, possessive individualism and the absolute primacy of market relations (O'Connor & Robinson 2008).

The successful takeover of globalization and displacement of the postwar international economic order was made possible also by the institutionalization of multilateralism and global governance. The postwar, post-colonial politics of aid and preferential trade agreements was subjugated by efforts to mainstream the creation of a rule-based free trade regime applicable to every nation in the world. Countries joined the three giants: World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and subjected themselves to the global coordination. One must emphasize, however, that these international organizations are *corporatized* in orientation. It appears that the fairness and equality was a cloak to sustain the legitimacy of the new world order and regime whereas in reality, the stratification among nations and the absence of a consensus on the effectiveness of its paradigm persist.

These global institutions have assumed a more powerful governing role that guaranteed compliance through consensus and coercion. Membership came at a price and imposed a new set of protocols and responsibilities especially for the developing countries. In the Philippines, policy loans required the restructuring of the public sector and the economy towards the three doctrines of liberalization, privatization and deregulation. Across the developing regions of the world, structural adjustment programs and conditions coordinated the global economy and enabled its management as a unitary entity. The transnational firms and more developed nations are the new managers, stepping over and dominating domestic policy making.

### **The Globalized Food**

The globalization of the world economy – the perpetuation of the neoliberal ideology, the institutionalization of multilateralism, the coordination of the global economy as a singular entity and the

sidestepping of national sovereignties – did not exempt the food and agriculture sector from its fangs. The food self-sufficiency/food security dichotomy is actually an outcome and manifestation of the transformation of the food sector as another viable venue for globalization to take place. Global food production and distribution are standardized, coordinated and subsumed under corporate and market paradigms. Food supplies are commodities which became as mobile as any good in the world. The logic of the market became applicable in order to streamline the efficiency of agriculture, weed out market glitches and consign food demand-supply dynamics to where it must *neoliberally* belong.

The globalization of food is the higher order of the international food order and division of labor espoused by the post-war scenario. Third world agriculture, and local economies altogether, became oriented to cater to the international market of food although it isn't necessarily their domestic food base. Indeed, self-sufficiency has become an anachronism especially when it has incurred losses of potential terms of trade gains. Furthering the reorientation, the developing nations through lower wages and weaker state regulations became profitable sites for outsourcing and off-shoring that created commodity chains and production networks for shoes, clothes and other commodities of the world. Export processing also zones proliferated. Call centers and BPO sites became the main stronghold of the Indian economy. Large US insurance, health industry, magazine subscription renewal, consumer credit and retailing firms have shifted their data processing positions off-shore to the Caribbean and Asia to take advantage of lower costs. The firms in the developed nations were left with more professional tasks of managing, designing and controlling the production of these commodities. For previously self-sufficient societies, it meant the sharply declining contribution of the agricultural sector to total gross national output.

This trail of analysis implies that the issue of food security inevitably becomes corporatized and subject to the same forces of neoliberalism. As food became commodified and entrenched in the capitalist system, it required the management of transnational banks, the system of states and multilateral organizations rather than the domestic nation-state. The consistency of demand for food created a very viable market and potential source of profit that led to the rise of food-related transnational corporations such as Cargill, Monsanto, and Novartis. Food-related TNCs share the characteristic of having global investments in the food industry and controlling much of how food is grown, processed, distributed, and/or purchased (Phillips 2006). TNCs have targeted and contested policies of food self-sufficiency and food import safety as restraints on the market and private accumulation – and instead consign these decisions in remote, confidential and bureaucratic organizations, in turn creating states as corporate entities themselves (McMichael 1995; Greenfield 1999). A corporate food regime has thus been created.

### **Actors of the Corporate Food Game**

The players in the globalized food regime, in particular large food-related TNCs, have utilized the apparatuses of multilateral agreements in order to widen and strengthen their corporate base. Multilateral agreements within the global governance framework expose itself as essentially corporatist if its apparatuses are examined. The issue of food security departs from the sole control of the nation-state and becomes enmeshed in a broad set of considerations which pertain to how it would participate in the global market economy: trade concerns, multilateral obligations and financial stature. Two cases are of paramount importance to the issue of food security: first is the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) negotiation in the Uruguay Round of the World Trade Organization and second is the Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) and Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) accord.

Logically speaking, the heavy US and EU agricultural subsidies which originated in the postwar era were anti-free trade and contradictory to the anti-protectionist stance of the World Trade Organization. Yet in the Uruguay Round of 1992, the so-called Blair House Accord, principally negotiated between the EU and US, was calculated to preserve their high level of agricultural subsidization and regulate their monopolistic competition for third country markets (Bello 1995). It exempted the direct farm subsidies from the universal reductions in trade protection, farm subsidies and government intervention pushed by the AoA under the so-called “Green Box” provisions of the agreement on the grounds that they are “decoupled” from production and thus “non-trade distorting” (Watkins 1996). At that, the high leverage of First World farmers over peasant farmers in the developing world was not eliminated and their incentives to cultivate and enter into agriculture continued to be depleted. Consequently, it perpetuated the dominance of EU and US in agriculture as the overproduction effects of the subsidies remained in place while it complemented the further integration of developing nations as food export-dependent workers in the global economy.

TNCs were also aggressively successful in dominating production processes through flexibility and standardizing food manufacturing and distribution through the use of agro-industrial monocultures and heavy employment of biotechnology. It ushered the intensification of genetic modification of plants and development of agricultural engineering as it banked on the discursive claim that technology is the solution to chronic food shortages and global hunger. They were able to penetrate nations within the circuit of the regime as TRIMs’ minimum market access rule guaranteed the “right to export” and

significantly reduced performance requirements and regulations imposed on foreign investment by host governments. It ridiculed any food safety requirements a nation-state would impose on food exports despite the questionable contents and hazardous elements it may contain. It also removed any direct burden of accountability in terms of enforcing sustainable environmental practices and preventing ecological depletion in the host countries.

Likewise, the ability to apply for patents on a variety of products and processes further widened the grip of TNCs and sealed their dominance over peasant farmers. Farmers can no longer have the right to plant their crops on the grounds of copyright infringement, despite it being developed culturally and historically by peasants, forest dwellers and local communities. For example, since the US company Rice Tec holds the patent over the Indian basmati rice variety, peasant farmers have to pay for using the seed and not doing so is tantamount to biopiracy. In this framework, only firms and states are legal entities where farmers and their community rights – including rights over traditional knowledge – are not recognized (Greenfield 1999).

Essentially, the globalization of food production and distribution enforced through these institutions aimed to depoliticize food and allow market rule to manage the issue. At the heart of this pursuit are discursive claims that TNC regime is key to solving global hunger and poverty through the advances in the efficiency of food production with biotechnology. In turn, this global food order shall make agriculture more profitable for poorer farmers and sustainable for nation-states to depend on the long-run. Food security then can be solved even without the meddling of the government which at present just obstructs the operation of the food business. The handling of the issue is carried away by the developments in the international level and governance is dispersed rather than concentrated in national entities. In this age of globalization, food security is conceived as the corporate reward to world market participation – completely delinked from the necessity and obligation to sustain and feed hungry human bodies of the people.

### **Systemic Patterns on Food Security**

The history of rise and fall of the postwar international food order and the emergence of a globalized food regime illustrates to us key insights about food and food security if seen through the lens of discourse.

Firstly, the extension of the neoliberal logic of capitalist ‘treadmill of production’ to the domain of food and agriculture reveals the power of food in defining the contours of international relations (Phillips 2006). Dialectically, while globalization drastically modified the way we produce, eat and consume, food

in itself is a powerful element that can define the political sustainability of a global economic order. We have seen how changes in agriculture are always backed by “development speak” or the supposed desire of the powerful nations and actors to eradicate poverty and hunger in poorer nations. Legitimacy of any order is always under fire and close scrutiny. The handling of the food dimension of the international order is a precarious but vital task because its deterioration may well generate powerful dissent and riots.

The dialectal relationship extends as food and the food system help create, sustain and reinforce the processes of globalization. The positioning of the farmer who produces for the world and the consumer who eats the food from the world sustains the meaningfulness of an integrated food system which triumphs over reclusive national productions and nurtures multiple ideas about globality. You can now eat French's in the Philippines, be a European citizen in Asia and serve American interests through African farms (Phillips 2006). The system of meanings in any food global order is crafted on the global level, but is localized and operated down to the smallest unit of analysis, the individual farmer and consumer for that matter, to propel and establish its authority.

In that case, the perpetuation of a global order is premised on discursive claims filtered through all levels encompassed by the global arrangement. The analysis, according to Friedmann, requires an examination of three mutually dependent but analytically distinct factors: state-to-state relations, transnational economic processes and changing class and sectoral structures within nations (1982). The same nuance applies in terms of the food security issue:

Firstly, contrary to globalization theorists who herald a retreat, the rationality of the state – of neither refusing to accept permanent hunger nor fully assigning the task of food security to the world market – still factors in the negotiations of the world order. The corporate regime, as institutionalized in the WTO, is incomplete and contradictory – precisely because the world order is authored by competing and unequal nations (McMichael 2000). We must evaluate the global food order as having specific statist interests such that of the Cold War strategy of the US in the postwar era and their large shares in funding the Bretton Woods institutions. It is countered by pursuits of other equally legitimate entities, such as EU's attempt to maintain a share in grain surplus markets or the developing nations' struggle to pin down hunger riots. It is a continuing push and pull of forces most especially when it intersects with other state values and obligations such as military security, human rights and social welfare. Thus, a global consensus on the best approach towards food security that enforces the ideal of fairness and level playing field in reality is almost impossible;

The second factor manifests itself in the contemporary food regime through the growing influence of transnational firms as another legitimate and equally powerful contender in the global economy. The favor they have received from GATT and WTO enabled these firms to attain the commodification of food suited to their business practices and profit extraction. This strategy included an assault to national regulatory policies in order to consolidate power over production and trading. At best, non-state actors such as TNCs equally mediate the flourishing and grip of the ideology espoused by the global food regime. From the angle of food security, the individual cannot rely on his/her national government but is now open to the vagaries of world market supply and pricing; and

Lastly, the wide scope and reach of the global food regime does not preclude still the patterns of domestic politics that may complement or contradict global processes. The stability of a setup assumes structural equivalence in national policies and the consenting acceptance of the transformations by its constituents. If this holds, the order is preserved, sustained and reproduced. On the other hand, if contradictions exist, then the propensity of a counter-movement and contention lurks to destabilize it. The large agricultural subsidies of US and EU, as we have said, contradicted their doctrine of free trade. Thus, a resistance and subsequent activism have spurred a strong challenge to this framework – this is an important dimension to the demise of the postwar food order. Similarly, a plethora of alternatives – including community supported and sustainable agriculture, organic food, principles of bio-diversity, fair trade movements for instance – has emerged to offer alternative solutions and respond to the marginalizing forces of globalization. Effectively, this tells us that the agrarian question and the domestic food security approach is also national interpretation of a global process (Polanyi 1957 in McMichael 1997).

Having all these considered, food security in this sense is an active construction of a system of meanings that involves the participation of every level of social organization. The idea of how food must be produced, what must be eaten, how it must be distributed, or what factors must be considered to claim that a nation is food secure is affected by global developments and transnational processes but ultimately filtered or complemented by contingent and historically specific domestic structures and politics. As a discourse, the idea of food security espoused by an era must be accepted, produced and reproduced to sustain its legitimacy and viability.

## **Conclusion**

The story of the evolution of food security discourse sheds light also to an important insight regarding the market and its relationship to politics. Today begs the question why the global markets failed to

materialize a stable food supply and price level to eradicate poverty, hunger, and food insecurity. Where exactly did things go wrong?

Firstly, the goal to depoliticize markets never succeeded because markets are fundamentally political. Historically, states have created markets from a framework of necessity and have constantly maintained a role in correcting externalities and its imperfections. Today, states and multilateral institutions seek to reconstruct the markets by restructuring states and international relations. All these transformation cannot be sanitized from political complications. The globalization of food assumed all units are market-oriented and that hunger is a market problem that has a market solution. The globalizers' concept of food security has debased subsistence farming, community practices and domestic nutrition diets in exchange for the "rewards" of world market integration. It was met with opposition and is turning out to be a futile effort because at the end, the profits mattered more than the people.

The corporate ethic of the concept of food security did not transform agriculture as a genuine pathway out of poverty. Instead it rendered it less and less as an anchor of societies, states, and cultures, and more and more as a tenuous component of corporate global sourcing strategies. It was governed by the criteria of market relations rather than by the social contract of the government to its people. By neglecting the adverse and equally prominent social and class transformation it brought, the depoliticization backfired by displacing the people and starving rather than saving them from death.

Clearly, we cannot deny that the organizing ideals of a market rule are essentially politically constructed. While globalization unleashed unprecedented growth and technological development unseen in human history, it opened up the doors also for contradictions to emerge. The forces of globalization were selective and exclusive. It privileges corporate over citizen rights and promises instead that a trickle down shall happen in order to compensate for the pains. At the same time, it abrogated the responsibility for broad social and ecological sustainability by framing it as an unnecessary constraint which impedes the market from working efficiently. Economic globalization seemed too blinded of its underlying antisocial tendencies and chose to confine resistance as a silent revolution quite easy to quell.

Lastly, the fact that the anthropocentric developments within globalization overlooked the delicate relationship between nature and food security. The recent climate change discourse has been reiterating this contradiction. Because food security is framed only as a problem of supply, the market solution became automatically applicable without considering the profound political dimensions in its elements such as price policies and distribution means. Consequently, new problems of resource depletion,

environmental degradation and unsustainable development policies have confounded further the food security problem.

Having all of these interplay, developing nations continue to be food insecure, yet almost paralyzed by international and natural circumstances from escaping the problem. At the same time, it tells us that the prevailing concept of food security will be impermanent. As long as we participate in the ensuing battle of ideas, institutions and modes of governance will continually transformed, politics will always be reconfigured and contested, and a genuine human face to the food order is never unachievable.

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