

Poverty and the Critical Security Agenda

PAULINE EADIE



POVERTY AND THE CRITICAL
SECURITY AGENDA

Dedicated to the Children of Payatas

Security is a slippery term.

McSweeney (1999)

Critical Security Series

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Salamat

List of Abbreviations

ADB Asian Development Bank
ALRP Accelerated Land Reform Programme
AMT Agumen ding Maling Talapagobra (General Workers Union)
APIS Annual Poverty Indicators Survey
ARB Agrarian Reform Beneficiary
ARC Agrarian Reform Community
ARF Agrarian Reform Fund
ARMM Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CA Compulsory Acquisition
CAFGU Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Units
CARE Comprehensive Assistance for Rural Empowerment
CARP Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme
CARP IA CARP-Impact Assessment
CBCP Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines
CBO Community Based Organisation
CEPAL Economic Commission for Latin America
CERD Centre for Rural Development
CLOA Certificate of Land Ownership Authority
CPAR Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform
CPP Communist Party of the Philippines
DAP Development Academy of the Philippines
DAPECOL Davao Penal Colony
DAR Department of Agrarian Reform
DARAB Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board
DENR Department of the Environment and Natural Resources
DILG Department of Interior and Local Government
DKMP Democratic Peasant Movement of the Philippines
ECLA United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
EDSA Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
EPZ Export Processing Zone
FAO Food and Agricultural Organization
FB Farmer Beneficiary
FDC Freedom From Debt Coalition
FIAN Food International Action Network
FIES Family Income and Expenditure Surveys
GATT General Agreements on Trade and Tariffs
HDI Human Development Index
HMB Hukbong Mapagpalay ng Bayan (People's Liberation Army)
IMF International Monetary Fund

ILO International Labour Organization
KMP Peasant Movement of the Philippines
KPMP Kalipunang Pambansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Pilipinas (National Confederation of Peasants in the Philippines).
LANFABA Lamintak Norte Farmer Beneficiaries Association
LDP Laban nanag Demokratikong Pilipino
LGC Local Government Code
LGU Local Government Unit
LUPA League for the Urban Poor
MMA Metro Manila Authority
MMC Metro Manila Commission
MNLF Moro National Liberation Front
MTPDP Medium –Term Philippine Development Plan
NAIAI Ninoy Aquino International Airport
NARBMPC Nagasi Agrarian Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative
NCPERD Negros Centre for People’s Empowerment and Rural Development
NGO Non-governmental Organization
NSO National Statistics Office
PARAD Provincial Agrarian Reform Adjudicator
PARRDS Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services
PEACE Philippines Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment Foundation
PGX People’s Global Exchange
PKM Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid (National Peasants’ Union)
PNP Philippines National Police
PCCC Philippines Compensation Claims Committee
PCSO Philippine Charity Sweepstake Office
PO People’s Organization
PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
PWI Procurement Watch Inc.
RCPD Resource Centre for People’s Development
SAPRIN Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative
SWS Social Weather Stations
TUCP Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
UCLA United Cebu Landowner’s Association
UFEARBAI United Florindo Employees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association Incorporated
UN United Nations
UNCC United Nations Compensation Commission
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNORKA Panbansang Ugnayan ng mga Lokal ng Nagsasariling Organisasyon ng mga Mamamayan sa Kanayunan
VLТ Voluntary Land Transfer
VMSEFI Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation Inc.

WB World Bank

WTO World Trade Organisation

ZOTO – Zone One Tondo Organization

Map of the Philippines





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Introduction

The sheer scale of global impoverishment, the World Bank (WB) cites a figure of 2.8 billion people living on less than \$2 per day (2001, p. 3) out of a global population of six billion, indicates that the need to address the problem of poverty is acute. Reconfigurations of the development agenda (Pieterse, 2000; Nustad, 2001) triggered by the alleged failure of development as a progressive paradigm have meant that other avenues must be devised through which to project ideas of 'progress'. However this emerges at a time when southern states are becoming increasingly marginalised by the inequalities generated by the neo-liberal rhetoric of the Washington Consensus (Chomsky, 1999; Stiglitz, 2002). Tragically the only option they may have is to try harder to toe the neo-liberal line, by becoming 'leaner and fitter' at the expense of the welfare of their populations.

International lending institutions have adopted a rhetoric of empowerment, inclusion and democracy for the poor. However the democracy that the WB and western governments, led by the United States, advocate is a western conception of political freedom. This should be viewed with deep scepticism; Joel Rocamora for instance asks 'After supporting authoritarian regimes throughout the world from Somoza to Marcos to Mobutu for decades, why has international capitalism shifted to support for democracy?' (2000, p. 1). This book is intended as a critical intervention into the qualitative debate over the relationship between democracy and poverty at a time when capability enhancement is being corrupted by neo-liberal players to enhance the market, rather than the poor. Normatively it is important that strategies for poverty alleviation reflect the needs of the poor themselves, rather than the agendas of the already rich. Poverty plays a central role in critical readings of security as it unavoidably impacts on the ability of actors to resist other threats to physical and social security. The poor are more vulnerable to, for instance, ill health, environmental degradation, hunger, thirst, illiteracy and homelessness than the rich. Indeed these various forms of insecurity can be seen as symptomatic of the condition of being poor.

The main aim of this book is to develop a meaningful and post-positivist intervention into critical security studies broadly, and poverty research specifically. Poverty should be regarded as central concern of the critical security agenda. However International Relations (IR) and its sub-field, security studies, have thus far relied on less than rigorous methodological approaches to the problem. Similarly practical interventions intended to bring about 'well-being' have tended to be guided by the needs of markets rather than peoples.

Methodologies of poverty research must be developed that are progressive and have some potential to actually facilitate concrete interventions into the problem. Whilst quantitative analyses may illustrate the scale of the problem, and offer the basis for comparison over time and space, they are weakly equipped to address the causal factors of poverty. This severely limits their usefulness in terms of a critical

agenda. Similarly poverty cannot be understood in terms of levels of wealth alone. Poverty research must take account of specific and often complex social environments in which poverty emerges and must be remedied. Poverty research must be informed from below and ideally a fruitful synergy must be developed between researchers and 'organic' actors at the local level which can best inform critical strategies to both pursue well-being, and deal with structures which constrain as well as enable.¹

The Invisibility of Poverty

Tooze and Murphy (1996), claim that poverty has been rendered 'invisible' in IR/International Political Economy (IPE). They argue that 'the concrete conditions of a globalising political economy and the social forces consequent on this [and] changes in the way we, as academics and citizens, understand theory and the links between theory and practice, particularly in the production of knowledge' (Tooze and Murphy, 1996, p. 681), now render the insignificance of poverty to IR/IPE a fiction. Poverty is a concrete and central consequence of the hegemony of neo-liberal market economics. The societal implications of this become central to IR/IPE. Demands placed on states and market mechanisms by 'discontents' lacking both basic needs and the structural conditions to allow well-being to be pursued may account for a large part of state behaviour and institutional policy. This is not to say that the demands of the poor are met, but that poverty emerges as a significant behavioural force within IR/IPE for civil society, states and international institutions. Consequently the poor should be treated as an active subject, rather than passive object, in poverty research.

Saurin notes that 'the study of international relations, and consequently, the types of explanations of international action and behaviour which have been put forward, have almost exclusively submitted to the deference of the already powerful' (1996, p. 657). He goes on to question whether we should 'understand from such a systematic exclusion that the existence and actions of eighty-five per cent of the world's population do not, in actual fact, matter to the proper and adequate explanation of international relations?' (Saurin, 1996, p. 657). This is a central theme of this book; if IR ignores the needs and concerns of the majority of the world's population, does this not undermine its effectiveness as a discipline?

The Limitations of Quantitative Research

The idea of the poor as passive object has been reinforced by the quantitative approaches adopted by positivist methodologies of poverty research. This is what

¹ This is what Giddens calls the 'duality of structure', see: (Giddens, 1983, p. 169).

Tooze and Murphy are referring to when they discuss 'the production of knowledge'. If research into poverty is guided by the hegemonic norms of the positivist research agenda within IR, or the neo-liberal agenda within market economics, then the research produced cannot avoid being a mere reflection of the scope and limitations of these norms.

Part of the problem with poverty research is that there are many conflicting ideas of what actually constitutes the condition of poverty or being poor. Similarly causal factors which impact upon lack of well-being may be multi-dimensional and synergistic, adding to the complex nature of the problem. Researchers have tended to pin down poverty by developing ever-more sophisticated ways of counting the poor as a means of at least quantifying the problem (Boltvinik; Ravallion and Chen, 1997). However critical researchers (McGee and Brock) claim that this search for quantitative perfection serves merely to disguise the fact that researchers are incapable of developing any meaningful ideas on how to address poverty. Therefore a critique of methodological problems in poverty research is a key theme of this book.

This critique is informed by history, social change and human agency, the omission of which, on the IR poverty research agenda, would be a 'staggering error' according to Saurin. Building on normative theory which attempts the 'complicated task of explaining the meaning of, setting out the relationship which holds between, and seeking to evaluate different comprehensive patterns of core normative concepts such as liberty, equality, justice and human rights, political obligation, sovereignty, group rights, self-determination [and] property rights' (Frost, 1994, p.110), this book seeks to reveal and test both structural constraints and emancipatory agency as critical variables in the poverty research agenda. The empirical testing ground for the claims made here is The Philippines, a country where the distribution of wealth and well-being can be tracked through a series of international interventions and domestic social divisions. Social inequality in the Philippines emerges as a process that has its roots deep within historical colonial experiences.

Democracy

By developing a socially situated critique of poverty the dynamics between society, the state and the market are better understood. These are not discrete and static variables that lend themselves to clinical quantitative analysis; however the way they converge is critical to a qualitative and progressive understanding of poverty. With this in mind the nexus between democracy and poverty alleviation is a central theme in this book. Sen argues that democracy acts not only to further policy responses to economic needs but that 'the conceptualization – including comprehension – of "economic needs" itself may require the exercise of such rights' (1999, p. 153). In other words solutions to poverty will be enhanced by a comprehension of the reality of the problem, and the poor themselves are best

placed to inform this agenda by virtue of their democratic freedoms and the accountability of the state to its citizens.

This process may however be undermined by the concurrent accountability of debtor states to international lending institutions and the demands of the neo-liberal market economy. In order to appear as a secure fiscal player and attractive investment opportunity, the basic needs of the poor may need to defer to the needs of the market. Individual freedoms and needs may come second to that of the social whole. The advantage of this could be that the state will be strengthened economically through inward investment and in time the benefits from this would be felt across domestic society. This is akin to the Lee thesis (See Li; Sen, 1999, p. 148-9), which is built upon a formulation of 'Asian Values', this claims that the individual will put social order and the good of the state before individual freedom. This is a problematic concept to apply to the Philippines however, as the perceived corrupt nature of political and economic elites, reduces civil confidence in the state administration to procure collective goods for social well-being.

Democratic freedoms result in often difficult demands being made of poor states, as the requirements of the electorate may conflict with those of the market. In the Philippines this relationship is played out in a political environment characterised by a vibrant civil society, yet endemic political corruption (Coronel, 1998; Kang, 2002). The form and function of democracy in the Philippines is a legacy of the years of martial law, from 1972-1986, endured under President Marcos (Hamilton-Paterson, 1998; Thompson, 1995). Similarly, years of colonial and neo-colonial control have cast a long shadow over Philippine social organization. The corrupt nature of Philippines politics has a long lineage, and is the consequence of the particular interplay between elite families, the church and the state in Philippine history (Anderson, 1995; Montinola, 1994). Both of these developments will be traced in order to inform the social backdrop against which contemporary poverty in The Philippines must be understood.

Surprisingly, as democratic accountability may hinder a state's ability to allow society to be abandoned to the rigours of the market, neo-liberal institutions such as the World Bank (WB) have also adopted a rhetoric of democracy as a strategy for poverty relief. The mantra of 'democracy' has now overtaken that of 'development'. Led by James Wolfensohn, President of the WB since 1995, and sensitive to criticism over its failing development policies in the mid 1990s, the World Bank sought to reinvent itself as a 'caring' institution with respect to poverty relief. A central aspect of this was the 'refocusing of the Bank's mission away from any association with society-wide development towards a focus on the poorest most marginalised people in poor societies' (Pender, 2002, p. 107). The rationale of this was to limit the role of the state in the development agenda. The result, however, was a weakening of social cohesion in the state as a whole. Therefore the empowerment that the poor were meant to gain through targeted forms of democracy floundered. With this in mind the rhetoric and reality of democracy, in relationship to poverty alleviation, is a core theme of this book.

Approach of the Book

The methodological approach in this book is owes a great debt to two key texts; Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* and Antonio Gramsci's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Polanyi's text offers a critique of the disruption of pre-industrial society by the market mechanisms of the Industrial Revolution. He argues that far from the market operating under conditions of *laissez faire*, guided only by Adam Smith's invisible hand, it is in fact the state that must facilitate the workings of the market, this is Polanyi's 'first movement'. However Polanyi's argument is that market hegemony becomes responsible for the 'demolition' of society. He claims that 'robbed of their protective cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation' (1957[1944], p. 73). In particular Polanyi offers a critique of the 'commodification' of labour as a mere market input arguing that 'to separate labor from all other forms of life and to subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and to replace them by a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one' (1957[1944], p. 163). This, therefore, invites an examination of the relationship between community and 'well-being' and suggests that examinations of poverty must account for more than mere levels of wealth.

Polanyi argues that land is intrinsically linked to labour and therefore social organization. He argues that economic function 'is but one of many vital functions of land. It invests man's life with stability; it is the site of his habitation; it is the condition of his physical safety; it is the landscape and the seasons' (1957[1944], p. 178). The tension over land and its multiple social and economic functions are also investigated in this book, drawing on spatial conflicts in both urban and rural contexts.

Polanyi's response to the disruption of society by the first movement is the 'double movement'. The state having facilitated the disruption of society through the first movement must now cope with the social consequences; this is the 'second' or 'double' movement.² Polanyi's work fails to adequately address the problem of social agency or how this double movement will evolve, but he does note that 'protectionism everywhere was producing the hard shell of the emerging unit of social life. The new entity was cast in the national mold, but had otherwise only little resemblance to its predecessors, the easy going nations of the past'

² Polanyi's position on state interventions to facilitate a double movement is somewhat different from that of Hayek. Whilst Polanyi sees the double movement as the rescue of society, Hayek warns that state intervention in the processes of production may lead to authoritarian control. Hayek advocates the idea of individual freedom and the idea of a minimal state. My concern is the relationship between poverty, the state and the market, and how society may counter the rigours of the market, but not the danger of authoritarianism, therefore I have not pursued Hayek's ideas on the minimal state here. See: (Hayek, 2001 [1944]).

(1957[1944], p. 202). His comments are indicative of a move away from liberal approaches towards the economy and towards economic mercantilism.

Polanyi's analytical weakness *vis-à-vis* social agency can be countered by reference to Gramsci's writings on counter-hegemony. Gramsci's work on wars of position and manoeuvre and the role of 'organic intellectuals' in social transformation, are used in this book to examine the agency of civil society actors within the Philippines. This investigation assesses whether organic intellectuals are capable of creating a meaningful regime change adequately addressing poverty. I also examine Gramsci's work on the '*veilleur de nuit*' (1971, pp. 261-4) and compare his ideas on a minimal state with those of Nozick and the state as 'night-watchman' (1974, pp. 25-8). Whereas Gramsci considers the state as minimal in relation to civil society, Nozick sees the state in a similar role but in relation to the market. By an examination of these ideas we are able to test the simultaneous pressures put on the state by both market and society. These pressures are central to the state's ability to address the problem of poverty. This relates to questions of power and where it lies in the international system, the market, the state or the electorate. This approach will provide the framework through which to examine the nature of the relationship between poverty research and democracy, whilst incorporating civil society, the state and the market in the analysis. Therefore a qualitative and socially situated analysis of poverty can be built. This book seeks to adapt the prescriptive agency which is outlined in Gramsci's theory of counter-hegemony and use it as the basis to assess the form and function of democracy in the Philippines and examine whether democracy is a sufficient, or simply necessary, variable in the search for well-being.

The Philippines

This book raises critical questions about poverty's peripheral location on the IR security agenda and the adequacy of current methodological forms of analysis. Issues such as political governance, the form and function of democracy, the location of power and control over the means of production within domestic society, and the possibilities for transformative agency by civil society, are all salient areas of concern for poverty research. Similarly the relationship of the state to wider international influences such as colonial and neo-colonial control, international lending institutions and the neo-liberal economy all impact on the emergence of poverty and remedial strategies.

The Philippines offers a rich case study to test many of these issues. It ranks 83rd on the UNDP's human development index for 2004 and is therefore classed as having medium human development. The UNDP also notes that 36.8 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line.³ The country has a colonial history, which runs from Spanish control to the often fraught relationship with the

³ However this figure is highly contested, an issue which will be expanded upon in subsequent chapters.

United States. Political control in the Philippines has been successively, colonial, authoritarian and democratic.

In recent history two Philippine presidents, one under political conditions of authoritarianism and one under democracy, have been ousted by 'People Power'. This phenomenon can be analysed to assess whether these 'wars of position' have in fact made a difference to the provision of well-being in the Philippines. We thus have in the Philippine context two significant junctures through which to explore the role of democracy in the alleviation of poverty. The Philippines is also characterised by extremely skewed patterns of land holding which has been a source of tension between elites and the masses for decades. Spatial conflicts exist which offer useful case study material in both urban and rural contexts, to which we can apply Polanyi's theories on the commodification of land and labour and the disruption of society by the market. The trajectory of Philippine history and civil and political development is complex and in many ways unique. The country offers a fascinating case study to test and develop the argument that qualitative approaches to poverty which account for specific social contexts are essential. Essential both in terms of the meaningful development of poverty as part of the critical security agenda, but also in terms of actually making a meaningful difference on the ground. To be of any concrete value poverty research cannot be an exercise confined to academic ivory towers.

The case study material for this book draws on research conducted in the Philippines; in Manila, and Cebu and Negros Occidental in the Visayan Islands. The objective of the research was to identify the political space available to civil society actors in the Philippines which would allow them to address the problem of poverty *themselves*. This, it is argued, is a prerequisite for a Gramscian type 'organic' approach to poverty alleviation. In the rural context the research agenda was based around the issue of land reform and the impact on society and poverty. In the urban context strategies devised by the poor in order to pursue well-being, based on forms of community organization and the relationship of the poor with both domestic forms of devolved democracy and the market economy were explored.

Research in the Philippines also served as an opportunity to examine and test the Gramscian conception of wars of position and manoeuvre which seek to make hegemonic forms of social control accountable to the needs of the poor. This can be applied to both the role of the state and neo-liberal market hegemony, 'as it is now acknowledged that growth cannot be switched on and off at will and that the effects of market reforms are not only complex, but also deeply linked to political and social structures' (Boer, 2001, p. 284). Importantly Philippine voices inform this analysis through a series of case studies.

This book seeks to ask *why* Philippine poverty exists, taking account of many spatial levels of analysis, from the very local to global, rather than seeking an enhanced analysis of *how much* poverty there is. Only once the social and cultural dynamics which underpin poverty are identified as central to research, can prescriptive remedies to relieve the problem be devised.