

Corruption, economic globalisation, and resistance: Insights from the Philippine rice industry

Grant W. Walton¹  | Shanice Espiritu-Amador²  | Imelda Deinla³

¹Development Policy Centre and Department of Policy and Governance, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

²Institute for Infrastructure in Society; Development Policy Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

³School of Law University of New England, Australia

Correspondence

Grant W Walton, Development Policy Centre and Department of Policy and Governance, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
Email: grant.walton@anu.edu.au

Funding information

This work was supported by the Australian Aid Program within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Abstract

Scholars have shown that narratives of corruption can both intensify economic globalisation and fuel resistance to it. However, little research has been done on how policy debates are framed by people with competing perspectives on corruption. This article draws on interviews with key stakeholders to highlight how narratives of corruption have framed debates about policy reform in the Philippine rice industry. Respondents whose views reflect an economic perspective that promotes market mechanisms to address corruption justified a law designed to deregulate the rice market. Their actions were a panacea to the growing power of cartels illegally and often corruptly importing rice into the country. Respondents whose views reflect a critical perspective argued that this law would only bolster cartel power and that other policy solutions such as land reform and self-sufficiency would reduce corruption and other injustices. Our analysis reveals how those debates informed deregulation of the Philippine rice sector and resulted in a Rice Tariffication Law in 2019. In the process, we reveal how competing perspectives on corruption and associated narratives are ideologically deployed to shape policy reforms that expand economic globalisation and benefit some groups, such as consumers, at the expense of others, particularly small-scale farmers.

KEYWORDS

corruption, globalisation, the Philippines, resistance, rice policy

1 | INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, narratives about corruption have become central to policy-making and political discourse around the world (Sampson, 2010). At the same time, scholarship on corruption has also increased (Michael, 2007; Michael & Bowser, 2009). While approaches to and scholarship on corruption have become increasingly diverse in academic literature and policy circles, an economic perspective has come to dominate how corruption is understood and addressed. One key strand of the economic perspective frames corruption as a type of government rent-seeking that reduces the efficiencies of markets. In

turn, those reflecting this economic approach have supported policies that reduce government monopolies and deregulate sectors subject to corruption (Ali & Isse, 2003; Goel & Nelson, 2005; Ohnesorge, 1999; Theobald, 1990). Some scholars have argued that certain neoliberal policy prescriptions that emanate from the economic perspective misrepresent the nature of corruption and the power-relations underpinning corrupt transactions. Critical geographers, anthropologists, and political scientists have argued that the economic perspective can be used to justify reducing the power of the state vis-a-vis the market (Hindess, 2005) and fails to address corruption (Brown & Cloke, 2011; Warf, 2016). They have also noted that narratives of

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2025 The Author(s). *Geographical Research* published by John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd on behalf of Institute of Australian Geographers.

corruption can both intensify economic globalisation and fuel resistance to it at different spatial scales (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2017, 2019; Prouse, 2021; Walton, 2018). Some critical geographers have called for scholars to examine how corruption narratives provide a platform for both progressive and regressive politics (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2019; Prouse, 2021).

This article answers that call by examining the ways in which both economic and critical perspectives are reflected in public policy debates informing the introduction of the Rice Tariffication Law¹ (RTL) in the Philippines, which was designed to deregulate the rice market. Those debates provide a suitable case study to investigate the deployment of economic and critical perspectives given that the RTL featured significant disputes about corruption and the benefits and drawbacks of economic globalisation. Our case study is the first we know of to examine how these economic and critical approaches on corruption are employed in debates about deregulation. Uniquely, it shows how corruption talk intersects with other narratives to support neoliberal policy prescriptions. In the process, we contribute to an emergent literature that highlights how corruption talk is ideologically deployed to shape policy-making. Such analysis is crucial if scholars and others are to understand what growing and global concerns about corruption might mean for those who all too often are excluded from the benefits of increasing economic globalisation—in our case Filipino small-scale farmers.

In Section 2, we provide an overview of key debates about the nature of corruption and responses to it. Section 3 provides an outline of the methodology, and Section 4 contextualises our case study, the Philippines. In Section 5, we present findings from the research and highlight the ways in which economic and critical perspectives on corruption framed debates about Philippine rice policy, and, in the process, we emphasise ambiguities in those debates. Section 6 provides some conclusions and argues that views about the benefits of economic globalisation, along with national and local grievances, were central to the way respondents interpreted corruption and recommended solutions to it.

2 | OVERVIEW OF KEY DEBATES

Many academics and policymakers define corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain (Walton, 2015). However, some have suggested that, by itself, this definition fails to capture the concept's complexities because it focuses on corruption involving government officials and politicians, which ignores corruption among and between private sector and civil society groups (Bratsis, 2003; Philp, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 2007). Academics have also pointed out that, in practice, the

Key insights

This article draws on interviews with key stakeholders to highlight how narratives of corruption framed debates about policy reform in the Philippine rice industry. It shows how competing perspectives were deployed ideologically in debates about deregulation and resulted in a policy that benefits some groups, such as consumers, at the expense of others, particularly small-scale farmers. The findings have wider salience for scholars and others interested in law, development, and justice.

meaning of corruption has changed significantly over time and across space (Harrison, 2006, 2007; Peritiwi, 2022; Scott, 1972). Some scholars have developed taxonomies to differentiate approaches by which to understand the concept. Drawing on the corruption literature, we now draw out another specific taxonomy of corruption that focuses on discerning different perspectives of corruption that shape both understandings of and responses to it.

2.1 | Neoliberalism and the economic perspective on corruption

Scholars have shown that both the literature on corruption and anti-corruption policy and practice revolve around what some call a “mainstream view” of corruption (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2019; Walton, 2018). The mainstream view places government institutions, including laws and public sector rules and guidelines, at the centre of understandings about and responses to corruption. Since the 1990s, scholars have noted that an economic perspective has become central to this mainstream view (Krastev, 2004). Pillay and Kluyers (2014, p. 95) have summarised the key elements of the economic perspective on corruption as “concerned with the influence of rational self-interest, efficiency and formal regulative structures in explaining the development of corruption.” The economic perspective thus focuses on government officials and institutions as drivers of corruption rather than on the private sector or civil society.

In turn, a key strand of the economic perspective perpetuates or at least justifies neoliberal policy prescriptions by positing that:

human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade

¹Republic Act No. 11203, 2018.

... [where] state interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum. (Harvey, 2005, p. 2)

Economists such as Rose-Ackerman (1999) and Klitgaard (1991) have placed the problem of corruption at the feet of monopolistic state activities. Klitgaard (1991), for instance, has suggested corruption risk equals public officials' degree of monopoly and discretion over a service or resource and is mitigated by improvements in the accountability among those managing these resources. In sociology (Graeff & Mehlkop, 2003), political science (Gerring & Thacker, 2005), and law (Prado, 2021), scholars have argued that corruption can be reduced under neoliberal policies—including those related to privatisation and deregulation. For example, a statistical examination of 181 countries by Gerring and Thacker (2005, p. 233) has shown that consistent “with the neoliberal argument ... open trade and investment policies and low, effective regulatory burdens do correlate with lower levels of political corruption,” although there is “no consistent relationship between the aggregate size of the public sector and political corruption.”

To address corruption, some scholars have focused on solutions to increase monitoring of officials and reduce governments' monopolistic tendencies, including through deregulation and public–private partnerships (Hindess, 2005; Williams, 1999). These neoliberal approaches were dominant in the 1990s and early 2000s and were pushed by governments, major donors, and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Hutchinson, 2005; Larmour, 1997; Szeftel, 1998). Kajsia (2015) has argued that between 1998 and 2005 dominant corruption discourse in Albania helped to institute a neoliberal order rather than meaningfully address corruption. Walton (2013, 2016) has highlighted the ways in which anti-corruption activists have called for neoliberal reforms to address corruption in Papua New Guinea. Such narratives can help justify various interventions, including structural adjustment programmes in the Global South (Zúñiga, 2018).

Implicit in such analyses and policy prescriptions are distinctions between government officials and politicians and non-governmental actors in the private sector and civil society. Distinguishing between government and non-government actors allows scholars to use the size of government as a proxy for the degree of monopolistic power. In Gerring and Thacker's study (2005), for example, the size of the public sector provided a proxy for monopolistic power. However, the distinction between the public, civil and private sectors has become increasingly blurred over the past four decades through what has been termed New Public Management (NPM). NPM results in closer relationships between and among the government, the private sector, and civil society through public–private partnerships to deliver public goods.

2.2 | The critical perspective on corruption

In response to the dominance of the economic perspective on corruption, another critical perspective has emerged, which foregrounds power relations inherent in both framings of and responses to corruption. The critical perspective encompasses works that critique the economic perspective from diverse positions and disciplines; this includes critique from anthropologists (de Sardan, 2005; Haller & Shore, 2005; Harrison, 2006), political scientists (Krstev, 2004), and, increasingly, geographers. Specifically, geographers have highlighted corruption narratives and practices in various settings, often pushing back against the dominant economic perspective on corruption (Brown & Cloke, 2005, 2006, 2007; Doshi & Ranganathan, 2017, 2019; Perry, 1994, 1997; Prouse, 2021; Walton, 2016, 2018; Warf, 2016, 2019).

Tying this geographic literature together is growing recognition of and attention to (1) the limitations of neoliberal policy solutions arising from the economic perspective; (2) the multiple scales at which narratives and practices of corruption operate; and (3) the importance of corruption narratives for framing world-views, rhetoric, and policy.

First, geographers have critiqued policy prescriptions emanating from advocates of the economic perspective, with some highlighting the lack of distinction between public and private spheres central to those advocates' definitions of corruption and policy prescriptions (Brown & Cloke, 2011). Some draw upon a Gramscian notion of the state to understand alliances between government and non-government actors (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2017; Prouse, 2021; Walton, 2016). For example, Prouse (2021, p. 3) frames her analysis of corruption narratives in Rio de Janeiro in Gramscian terms, noting that corruption there involves “a diffuse set of actors that may include officials in government positions, the legislature, and people outside the official government apparatus who are conjoined (or articulated) in shared interest at a given moment.” In the process, she pushes back against the binaries implicit within the economic perspective.

Second, geographers have highlighted the multi-scalar nature of corruption narratives and practices. Some have focused on the ways in which corruption and money laundering are facilitated by networks of global and regional intermediaries implicating both government and non-governmental actors (Brown & Cloke, 2007; Walton & Dinnen, 2020). Others have highlighted the ways in which narratives of corruption move across local, national, and international scales (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2019; Prouse, 2021; Walton, 2021). Walton (2021), for instance, has

shown how transnational and translocal framings and experiences shaped narratives of corruption in Solomon Islands.

Third, geographers have shown how paying attention to narratives of corruption—or “corruption talk”—can help stakeholders reframe the ways in which ordinary people understand and respond to it. For example, pushing back against economic framings, Doshi and Ranganathan (2017, 2019) have highlighted the importance of understanding how corruption narratives provide a critique of contemporary capitalism. In their ethnographic study of land grabs in Mumbai and Bengaluru (Bangalore), they find that “corruption talk by slum-based and lower-middle-class residents and activists advances an ethical critique of contemporary capitalism” by expressing “a sense of structural injustice in this moment of sharpening urban inequality” (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2017, p. 183).

2.3 | Emergent ambiguities

While the economic and critical perspectives are often set in opposition to one another (Michael, 2004), some scholars have stressed their ambiguities. For example, geographers have pointed out that corruption talk can both highlight inequalities emanating from capitalism and help to advance neoliberal agendas (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2019, p. 437). For Brown and Cloke (2004, p. 273), the “fact that the anti-corruption banner has been taken up by those promoting neoliberal reforms does not negate the need for the issue to be taken seriously by those opposed to that agenda.” Such insights are significant because they provide an opening for scholars to move beyond a dichotomous approach to studying corruption in which corruption talk either represents an economic or critical perspective, and allows researchers to consider it as a floating signifier.

While critical literature has helped scholars and others reimagine the nature of corruption and its narratives, scant attention has been paid to how policy debates are framed by the ambiguities in critical and economic perspectives. Walton (2018) and Michael (2004) have highlighted how these perspectives help frame anti-corruption efforts; however, we can find no studies that do the same for other types of policy formulation. We seek to remedy that gap below.

3 | THE RICE INDUSTRY AND CORRUPTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Rice is the Philippines’ most important staple crop. It is estimated that each Filipino consumes a total of 133 kg of rice annually (United States Department of

Agriculture, 2021). The Philippines also has relatively high population growth—around 1.5% in 2021 compared with the world average of 1% per annum (World Bank, 2023). Thus, the amount of rice people consume is expected to increase, and there have been long-running debates about how best to secure rice stocks and production while keeping prices low for consumers. Because of uncertainties facing global rice production, some public officials such as Piñol (2021) have advocated that Filipinos become self-sufficient and focus on increasing local production. Others have argued that securing an adequate rice supply requires the government to increase stocks of imported rice (Villareal, 2021).

In the 1970s, the Philippines did achieve rice self-sufficiency and even exported rice in the early 1980s. But that period proved an exception (Dawe et al., 2006, p. 6). Despite efforts to restrict the amount of rice imported into the country, the Philippines has long been one of the larger rice importers in the world, now second only to China (Rappler.com, 2021).

3.1 | Land reform: An alternative reform agenda

Reflecting a neo-Malthusian view of food security, some academics and policymakers have argued that the Philippines has no choice but to import rice because of a rapidly growing population and environmental constraints. Indeed, Dawe et al. (2006) have argued that the Philippines does not feature the kinds of geography or topography that could ensure adequate rice production compared with other traditional exporter nations such as Myanmar, Thailand, Laos PDR, Vietnam, and Cambodia (Wailes & Chavez, 2012). Others have noted that weather patterns further restrict reliable rice production (Sutton et al., 2019).

Despite these limitations, some farmer groups suggest the Philippines could become a self-sufficient producer of rice if more effective land reforms were enacted (Nobuhiko, 2000, p. 74). Currently, more than half the population lives in rural areas and 40% of land belongs to the agricultural sector, employing almost 25% of Filipinos (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2023). The best parcels of arable land still belong to a few landowners in ways reminiscent of Spanish colonial arrangements such as the *encomienda* (labour for protection) and *hacienda* (estate) systems (Carranza, 2015). Inequalities in land ownership have created armed agrarian unrest focused on breaking the land oligopolies (Carranza, 2015). Because of rural unrest, several attempts at land reform have been made such as that by Former President Ferdinand Marcos, who sought land redistribution of rice and corn lands in 1972, or that by Former President

Corazon Aquino, who championed the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in 1988. However, vested interests shaped such initiatives in the case of Marcos's reforms or were poorly enforced—as exemplified in Aquino's CARP (Borras, 2001). CARP's success, however, remains disputed, with some claiming it has advanced land equity, and others pointing to widespread land issues for its failure (Carranza, 2015).

Leftist leaders and farmers movements have criticised neoliberal policies that result in higher levels of imports (Davidson, 2016) and depress farm gate prices of domestic rice (Dela Pena, 2022). Prior to the RTL reform, critics had already suggested that increased supply may disincentivise the long-time pursuit of rice self-sufficiency (Arandez-Tanchuling, 2011) and that local farmers lose out when competing against cheaper imported rice. From that perspective, land reform is considered a way to improve rice supply and self-sufficiency. With the rural poor often beholden to landowners accused of trampling on their human rights, the push for land reforms is a fight for land equality and helps upend land ownership systems that disadvantage the poor and marginalised (Carranza, 2015; Franco, 2008).

3.2 | Corruption and the rice industry

Scholarship on the Philippines has examined links between corruption and the rice industry and agricultural reform more broadly (Davidson, 2018; Fang, 2016; Tolentino & de la Pena, 2020; You, 2015). That literature is important because it highlights how corruption has (1) shaped policy (Tolentino & de la Pena, 2020) and grown during the passage of failed land reforms (You, 2015); (2) helped diminish rice productivity and increase import dependence (Davidson, 2018), and (3) helped presidential candidates by generating illicit funds through rice imports (Fang, 2016). Much of the literature has, therefore, described corruption and its impacts in normative terms. While there have been some efforts to reflect on the contested nature of corruption in the Philippines (Ligthart, 2010), when it comes to the rice industry scholars have focused on corruption in terms of its impacts rather than on how corruption talk has shaped policy.

Media reports have regularly highlighted links between corruption and smuggling, price manipulation, hoarding, and manipulation of import quotas. One case involving Davidson Bangayan/Dante Tan in 2013 saw Tan tagged as the “Goliath of Rice Smuggling” (Cabacungan, 2013). In line with Gramscian ideas, the case revealed a coalition involving government and non-government actors. Tan was identified and arrested after having been found to have smuggled rice worth P217 million from Thailand, which manipulated

the supply and consequently, the price of rice in the market (Macaraig, 2014). Farmers' cooperatives were used as “dummies” of this criminal enterprise, to bid for import quotas and thus monopolise rice supply and distribution. The cooperatives did not possess sufficient financial capacity to import rice and thus sold their quotas to “financiers.” The case highlights the number and variety of actors involved in corruption in the rice sector.

The National Food Authority (NFA) has played a central role in regulating the Philippine rice supply, although it, too, has been accused of corruption. From its creation in September 1972 to the signing of the RTL (Republic Act No. 11203, 2018) in February 2019, the NFA's role has been to stabilise the domestic price of palay—rice that has not yet been husked—by buying at high prices and selling at lower prices (DA Communications Group, 2019). To mitigate government monopolies, under former Presidents Marcos, Corazon “Cory” Aquino, and Fidel Ramos, attempts have been made to encourage private sector participation and allow more competition into the market. Despite such efforts, and despite the country gaining membership to the World Trade Organization in 1995, until 2019 the NFA played a central and monopolistic role in regulating and setting quotas for rice importation. The NFA's intervention in the market resulted in rising rice prices, which, while detrimental for consumers, benefitted some farmers (DA Communications Group, 2019; Ocampo & Pobre, 2021). Over time the NFA's control over rice imports has helped fuel inflation (Tolentino & de la Pena, 2020) and has led to accusations of mismanagement and corruption (Mendoza & Torres, 2019). For example, Senator Risa Hontiveros has accused former NFA administrator Jason Aquino and other insiders of receiving bribes that total P2 billion (approximately US\$35.7 million), excluding other money-making schemes inside the agency (Elemia, 2018). Because of such accusations, in the lead-up to the passage of the RTL, a few senators recommended Aquino be sacked and the NFA be abolished (Galvez, 2018).

3.3 | The RTL

In the context of growing concern about rising rice prices, inefficiencies, and corruption in the rice sector, the RTL (Rep. Act 11203) was passed by the Philippine Congress in March 2019. The RTL ended the NFA's monopoly, removed quantitative restrictions on rice imports and replaced it with a 35% import tariff, and established the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF). To improve productivity in the local rice industry, the RCEF would use money from tariffs, totalling around P10 billion or approximately US\$178.5 million per year (Ocampo & Pobre, 2021).

The law's enactment was facilitated by different stakeholders, including those from civil society, public servants, and politicians, all of whom have been engaged in debates about the rice sector in particular, and corruption more generally. For example, civil society organisations such as the Action for Economic Reform (AER) and the Coalition for Change (CfC) advocated for the passage of the bill and engaged in a broader anti-corruption crusade. Some politicians involved in drafting the RTL have been known to be anti-corruption and good governance advocates, among them Senator Franklin Drilon, who was the Senate President during the term of former President Benigno Aquino Jr. and who instituted anti-corruption initiatives in a policy known as "Daang Matuwid" (Right Path). During the term of former President Rodrigo Duterte, a formidable economic team was constituted and made responsible for pushing the agenda for rice tariffication, despite opposition from the secretary of agriculture at the time. Its members were known for their dislike of market inefficiencies such as corruption.

Tolentino and de la Pena (2020) have argued that the RTL helped to lower rice prices and reduce inflation during the latter months of 2019, and subsequent economic modelling by Balié et al. (2021) has found that the reform helped reduce poverty but negatively affected rice farmers. This outcome occurred even though the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)—the Philippine government's think tank—projected that the policy would increase income poverty by a total of 0.56 percentage points annually (Briones, 2021). Others have expressed concern that the RTL would do little to address the power of illegal rice cartels over the rice industry. Senators have criticised Department of Agriculture officials for allowing farmers' cooperatives to import rice from blacklisted traders, because rice-producing provinces are the very provinces with larger rice imports (Rivas, 2021).

Debates about rice policy in the Philippines thus feature longstanding concerns about corruption—particularly as related to the NFA, importers, and cartels—and about who might benefit from deregulation and neoliberal reform. In other words, debates about deregulating the rice sector have featured calls for greater neoliberal reforms associated with the economic perspective on corruption and elements of a progressive politics associated with the critical perspective. Mendoza and Torres (2019) have highlighted the point that corruption had been a key concern for policymakers drafting the RTL. Yet, scant research has been conducted to understand how narratives of corruption shape rice policy. Other, popular narratives about the RTL have often focused on rice supply and price (Ocampo & Pobre, 2021), rather than on corruption narratives.

4 | METHODOLOGY

Below, we draw on semi-structured interviews with 12 key stakeholders involved with the Philippine rice industry. Following receipt of ethics clearances, those interviewed were identified using snowball sampling and included representatives from civil society, national politicians, personnel from the NFA, and senior executives from the private sector, active in debates about the RTL (Table 1). Interviews were conducted in Manila in June 2018. The research captures respondents' views in the lead-up to the RTL bill being passed. The research thus provides novel insights into how the critical and economic perspectives were employed *at a time of heightened debate* about neoliberal policy prescriptions. The findings allow us to examine *how* corruption talk aligns with other narratives that serve to justify or resist deregulation.

Respondents' engagement with the rice sector differed. Some worked directly in the rice industry, among them, the women farmers, farmers' groups, and the businessperson. Three were current or former NFA officials who understood the agency's workings, allegations of corruption involving their personnel, and

TABLE 1 Respondents.

Position/organisation	Gender	Role
Civil society rice alliance	Female	Advocacy on behalf of women farmers
Civil society rice alliance	Female	Advocacy on behalf of women farmers
Farmers civil society organisation	Male	Advocacy on behalf of farmers
Farmers civil society organisation	Female	Advocacy on behalf of farmers
NFA	Male	Senior management of the country's rice regulator
NFA	Male	Senior management of the country's rice regulator
Former senior NFA administrator	Male	Rice governance expert
National politician	Male	Congressman—Left leaning
National politician	Male	Congressman—Centrist
Agricultural industry representative	Male	CEO of international agribusiness
Government research institute	Male	Senior representative with long background in government administration
Economic advisor and academic	Male	Economic advisor to government

Abbreviation: NFA, National Food Authority.

debates about the RTL. Two were sitting national legislators who directly shaped RTL deliberations in the Philippine Congress. Two had backgrounds working in academe and government administration and were consultants to the sponsoring legislators. In what follows, we note points of intersection among the groups. For example, farmers' groups were connected to the left-leaning congress representative we interviewed and helped coordinate messages and campaigns against the RTL.

Interviews were taped and transcribed and featured wide-ranging discussions about challenges about the RTL and the rice industry more generally. Discussion about corruption came up in response to direct and indirect questions about corruption and mismanagement in the industry, although some respondents mentioned the issue without prompting. When talking about corruption, respondents provided various examples, including cartel members bribing officials to ignore cartels illegally importing rice, and directly influencing politicians and regulators to look after their interests. They discussed other forms of corruption such as bribery between politicians, government officials, and suppliers. Respondents also described corrupt behaviour in oblique ways, for example, by referring to undue influence. Thus, our description of corruption is not an examination of its meaning per se. Rather, it reflects a description of acts that can be defined as the “abuse of power for private gain.” By focusing on an abuse of power rather than an abuse of public office, this definition allows for corruption that does not involve government officials (Walton, 2015) deployed to achieve policy, political and personal objectives.

5 | FINDINGS: KEY DEBATES FRAMING THE RTL

This section examines how respondents reflected on economic and critical perspectives on corruption and their ambiguities in debates about the Philippine rice industry and tariffication reform.

5.1 | The economic perspective on corruption

As conceived above, the economic perspective focuses on government monopolies as key drivers of corruption and favours market-oriented reforms as an antidote. Some we interviewed—particularly a member of Congress and an economic advisor—reflected the economic perspective. For them, the RTL was necessary because the state and its regulator, the NFA, had become overly powerful and resembled a monopoly. A senior agribusiness leader said that the NFA was conflicted because it was both a regulator and distributor of

subsidised rice; this conflict of interest, he suggested, paved the way for corruption.

Some acknowledged that cartels' oligopoly was at the heart of the rice industry's corruption. For example, a member of the Philippine Congress said rice cartels have become established across the supply chain:

the cartels control the production side ... [This control means] they give out loans to the farmers at the usual usurious interest, they buy the wet palay, and the rice at ... much lower prices and they sell it ... at a higher price, so ... it's really the cartels who are in control.

However, to justify support for the RTL, the respondent noted that this situation was a product of government corruption; that is, government officials had been bought off by members of powerful cartels, which allowed the cartels power over rice importation and distribution.

In turn, some respondents thought greater competition would reduce corruption. A senior member of the agribusiness sector said that once the RTL was introduced there would be: “so many players in the market, you[’ll] have hundreds of them. I don’t think that you’ll ever have a cartel because there’s so many big players in the market.” In other words, the RTL would help reduce the hold the cartels have over the rice industry by encouraging competition in the rice market and in turn reduce corruption.

For some, the potential for the RTL to reduce corruption by fostering improved competition justified reducing the NFA's mandate. An influential consultant to the national government argued that under the RTL bill, “the charter of the NFA will [have to] change and the monopoly of the NFA over rice [imports] will have to end.” In other words, by opening competition, the state regulator would no longer import subsidised rice. It would lose its legal monopoly over importing rice—thus reducing its potential for engaging in and allowing corruption in the sector.

5.1.1 | Interwoven narratives and the economic perspective

Respondents reflecting the economic perspective wove into their concerns about corruption three additional arguments about the importance of opening the rice industry to competition. First, some suggested that the RTL would help the national government uphold its international obligations. One government official noted that “We [became a member of the] WTO in 1995 and we sort of had special treatment ... the rice waiver ended last year and so technically we are non-compliant with our obligations.” He argued that, through

the RTL, removing quantitative restrictions on rice importation would help uphold international global trading obligations.

Second, those reflecting the economic perspective argued that the Philippines faced significant natural and economic disadvantages preventing rice self-sufficiency. The first such concern related to labour costs. For example, the senior representative from agribusiness said, the “reason we are not competitive: ... it’s the labour cost. It’s a vicious cycle when you look at the cost per kilo of palay or rice, our main disadvantage [is] labour ... because our farmers don’t like to farm anymore.” For this respondent, increased mechanisation could help to address such problems.

Respondents also cited concerns about constraints related to the country’s natural and built environments. A centrist member of Congress noted that even if labour costs could be overcome, the Philippines faced significant limitations on land available for rice production. He said that while the country had around 4.2 million hectares of land for production,² “almost half of that are [in] the upland area ... especially in Mindanao [and] north Luzon [where] production is significantly lower.” In turn, the respondent suggested international competition would be difficult, given that, in his estimation, per hectare rice production in Thailand and Vietnam was at least twice as efficient.

Third, respondents spoke about expected benefits the RTL bill would bring for consumers. An agribusiness respondent noted that “consumers will be the ones who will benefit” from lower rice prices] and that “today [there] are more consumers than farmers.” The economic consultant was keen to stress the point that the lower price of rice would ultimately benefit farmers also, suggesting that lowering rice prices might reduce wages in the farming sector and thus improve farmers’ bottom lines—although such benefits have not yet materialised (Balié et al., 2021). He explained that the RTL was preferable to the government’s policy to subsidise and control rice exports because, under that policy, there was no assurance that even if Filipino farmers increased production consumers would see lower prices.

In sum, respondents reflecting the economic perspective on corruption said that key reasons for supporting the RTL included opportunities to fulfil international obligations, address the lack of competitive advantage in producing rice, price reductions for consumers, and resolving corruption in the industry. With an influx of private importers, the reform could reduce the potential for the government and cartels to monopolise imports and facilitate corruption.

5.2 | The critical perspective on corruption

The critical perspective on corruption foregrounds power relations that underpin narratives of corruption and anti-corruption reforms. Those who reflected the critical perspective were mostly civil society activists and left-leaning politicians. They were sceptical about the RTL’s potential to address corruption. Like respondents who reflected the economic perspective, critical respondents suggested that the government and rice importers orchestrated a rice shortage. For example, a senior agribusiness respondent said:

just two months ago the NFA announced that we have a rice shortage, a supply shortage, [and then advocated for] the need to immediately certify another wave of importation for the month of June. [As a result] 250 thousand metric tons were immediately imported here in[to] the Philippines. Now ... the question is whether there is really a shortage [or if it is being artificially manipulated] ... [T]his has been orchestrated. We call it ... an artificial rice shortage just to justify another wave of importation and it will definitely benefit whoever the favoured private traders are being awarded import permits.

In response to such accusations, one senior representative from the NFA confirmed that smuggling was facilitated through corruption between some government personnel and rice importers, but noted that efforts to address this situation had been curtailed by the government:

We have implemented reforms at the NFA on the procurement of rice, including policing our ports from smugglers. [However,] these reforms had been removed or dismissed by the current administration. Smuggling has gone up this time, and all controls have been removed. Now [it is] very easy to import rice as [our] checklist is not being followed.

Respondents also noted that private traders enabled corruption. One respondent from the NFA, for example, said that even after the RTL was passed corruption would be possible because there was a chance that “even farmers’ cooperatives” (who are provided with import quotas) could be paid off by “big capitalists” who could also connive to monopolise rice imports.

Critical respondents advocated solutions that involved greater levels and intensities of government interventions and that would result in higher levels of

²According to the USDA International Production Assessment Division [2024], the actual land area for rice production is at 4.8 ha.

local production. For example, after explaining how government corruption led to illegal rice entering the country, a left-leaning congressman suggested that rather than introducing the RTL—which he and his party opposed due to its potential to harm farming communities—it was the “burden of the government” to fix legislative loopholes and properly police them to address corruption. A respondent from agribusiness also explained how restricting imports would reduce the potential for corruption-induced smuggling. He said, “if [the government] constricts importation, you constrict the opportunity for rice smuggling.” Such restrictions were only possible if Filipinos grew enough rice to address “domestic consumption.” Doing so, he said, had to be a “priority of government” and would ultimately “stop ... rice smuggling.”

Others expressed similar sentiments. One female civil society respondent, for example, argued that smuggling in the rice sector was a direct result of private sector involvement. In turn, she said, “it must be the government who will import rice, the government must not allow the private sector to do this [on] its behalf.” When asked about how to address corruption, she replied, “we have to stop this importation of rice because it can breed corruption ... [and at the moment] no one is caught.” She went on to explain that the RTL would significantly harm small-scale farmers and undermine farmers’ cooperatives. In turn, rather than introduce the RTL, she suggested, “we have to police this smuggling, this hoarding.”

5.2.1 | Reframing (anti-)corruption: Moving towards land reform

Rather than consider the government as mostly responsible for corruption, critical respondents blamed land-owning capitalist elites. For instance, one civil society representative said the reason that farmers have become so disadvantaged is that most politicians are landlords and they “go into politics to preserve [their] properties.” Consequently, politicians were accused of profiting by helping convert agricultural land into parcels for non-agricultural use. One respondent from a local farmers’ group discussed the lack of restrictions on reclassifying agricultural land by noting that the “original land reform laws were criticised because, for example, [landowners] were allowed to re-classify lands for industrial or commercial [use].”

This concern was echoed by a respondent from the agribusiness industry, who said:

there are other uses not only in agribusiness but also in mining ... being converted for high-end condominiums, malls, [and] residential areas. These are

agricultural lands being converted to medium to high-end subdivisions by real-estate developers which, in our case in the Philippines, are also politicians, senators, and members of Congress.

In turn, respondents called for land reform that was more meaningful and far-reaching than previous efforts. One civil society respondent said that “despite the land reform program of previous and present administrations, we [believe] that all of the government’s land reform programs are failure. [They have] even resulted [in] the concentration of land ownership to landlords.”

Ultimately, when respondents reflected the critical perspective, they stressed the view that the RTL would hurt farmers and fail to address ongoing issues of corruption and food insecurity. Instead, they called for greater levels and intensities of government intervention and land reform that ultimately they believed would benefit farmers and lead to self-sufficiency.

5.3 | Ambiguities

Both the economic and critical perspectives had staunch adherents. The economic perspective was most ardently reflected by an economic consultant to the government and a centrist congressman. The critical perspective was most strongly advocated by those from civil society and a left-leaning congressman. However, some respondents moved between these perspectives. For example, a senior respondent from the agricultural industry acknowledged that the RTL might undermine the corruption of cartels, but he wanted to see the country move towards higher levels of self-sufficiency which would mean the agricultural industry would play an important role.

Respondents who reflected comparable opinions sometimes had contrasting world-views. For example, respondents from civil society groups and a senior respondent from the agricultural industry reflected the critical perspective, and commenting on this accord, a respondent from the agricultural industry said, “We differ a lot on how to achieve rice sufficiency, food security and general food sovereignty” but they were united in their belief that the Department of Agriculture’s policies were “far from what’s [needed] to address ... issues like rice sufficiency and food security. In fact, they are allergic to the term food sovereignty because again, the policy of liberalisation has been there.” Thus, there were key differences among some of those reflecting the critical perspective insofar as some were anti-capitalist, while others were part of the capitalist elite; however, they were united by their concern about the government’s push for (neo)liberalisation in the rice sector.

6 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Debates about how to address corruption have been dominated by an economic perspective in both academic and policy circles. Here, we have shown how the economic perspective was drawn on by policymakers and researchers to argue for less regulation of the Philippine rice industry. Those advocating for the RTL cited the monopolistic tendencies of the government, the ineffectiveness of the national regulator, the NFA, and corruption involving government officials, rice cartels, and other actors. They argued that separating public and private spheres was key to reducing corruption, with the private sector being seen as “less corrupt” than the government. This view circulated despite the fact—in line with Gramsci’s ideas about the intersection of government and non-government actors—that corruption is perpetuated in the country’s rice sector by a complex coalition involving government and non-government stakeholders. Such concerns about corruption intersected with broader narratives about the country’s inability to increase rice production and manage consumer demands.

The academic literature has featured a critical perspective on corruption that pushes back against neoliberal policy prescriptions that can emanate from the economic perspective. Some respondents reflected this perspective when raising concerns about corruption involving elites—including politicians—who have been advancing neoliberal policies. For respondents reflecting the critical perspective, corruption is a product of failures in past government reforms that have given landholders and business owners excessive influence over politics and land use, including for non-agricultural purposes (Lanzona, 2019). They also suggested that corruption could be enabled through government monopolies, and partnerships between government and non-government actors at critical junctures, a finding that maps onto other studies elsewhere (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2017, 2019; Prouse, 2021; Walton, 2018). From that understanding, addressing corruption and other injustices will require an overhaul of land reform laws and greater oversight of elites—from both the public and private sectors.

The economic perspective focused on reducing the power/monopoly of the government by improving competition—and that helped justify the need for the RTL. This strategy reflects those documented in other research, which suggests that framing corruption as a problem central to government monopolies and emphasising an imagined separation between government and non-governmental actors can reinforce neoliberal policy prescriptions (Brown & Cloke, 2005; Hindess, 2005; Querijero & Amorado, 2006; Walton, 2013). However, in the case of the Philippines, the success of the economic perspective was rooted in

how corruption narratives intermingled with other concerns - particularly around the cost of rice to consumers, and was shaped by the power of groups advocating for reform. This suggests that to shift policy, the economic perspective needs support from powerful actors and must be wedded to other justifications for reform. In turn, corruption narratives per se do not produce political, economic, or social outcomes; it is the way they are interwoven and support other narratives with the same aim.

While some respondents emphasised one perspective over another, oftentimes, the dichotomy broke down. Indeed, the findings highlight certain ambiguities scholars, particularly geographers, have suggested are inherent in narratives of corruption (Brown & Cloke, 2004; Doshi & Ranganathan, 2019). For example, antithetical motivations drive civil society groups who advocate for farmers rights and agricultural companies who are focused on increasing profits, yet the two share some concerns about corruption and advocate for similar solutions such as self-sufficiency and land reform. Most respondents were concerned about the lack of competitive advantage in terms of rice production, the breadth and depth of corruption within the sector, and failed land reforms that have led to critical disjunctures in rice policy. There was broad agreement that the RTL would hurt small scale farmers. This concern, subsequent to our research, led the government to amend the RTL at the end of 2024 to significantly increase subsidies in order to support farmers (Department of Agriculture, 2024).

While ambiguities are apparent, our analysis highlights the importance of corruption narratives for extracting particular political and economic outcomes. To date, such work is rare. However research that builds on this analysis could help researchers and policymakers understand why and how policy reforms succeed or are resisted and why and how corruption talk can help disenfranchise certain groups while enfranchising others. Indeed, there is need for more research on how corruption talk is ideologically co-opted, refined, and aligned with other narratives such as consumer power, globalisation, and land reform. Future research should involve diverse groups representing different interests and exercising different forms of power within different contexts. In an age of intensifying global capitalism and growing concern about corruption, further research on corruption narratives is needed more than ever.

Finally, the case study highlights the importance of thinking about corruption talk as a diagnostic for local, national, and international processes profoundly important to geographers and those in allied fields (Brown & Cloke, 2007; Walton & Dinnen, 2020). In the Philippines, narratives of corruption have tended to focus on two spatial scales: the international (e.g., the problems of global capitalism) and the national

(e.g., the failures of national land reform). Importantly, our respondents also highlighted the impacts of the RTL on the local scale (particularly on local farmers and cooperatives). Considering corruption in the ways we have described thus helps researchers and others move away from normative approaches to studying corruption that centre on the nation-state to the neglect of other spatial scales.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Justin Baquisal for his work in organising interviews in Manila and helping with translation. Also, we would like to thank all of those we interviewed for their time and terrific insights. Thanks also to the reviewers and, in particular, to Professor Elaine Stratford, Editor-in-Chief, for helpful comments. All errors remain the responsibility of the authors. Open access publishing facilitated by Australian National University, as part of the Wiley - Australian National University agreement via the Council of Australian University Librarians.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not shared.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethics approval for this research was granted under the Strengthening State and Society Responses to Corruption project through the Australian National University's Expedited Ethical Review (E2) and variation submitted on 22/02/2018. Record number: 8427. Protocol: 2016/456. All subjects provided appropriate informed consent.

ORCID

Grant W. Walton  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2813-2753>

Shanice Espiritu-Amador  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6346-7308>

REFERENCES

- Ali, A. M., & Isse, H. S. (2003). Determinants of economic corruption: A cross-country comparison. *Cato Journal*, 22(3), 449–466.
- Arandez-Tanchuling, H. (2011). Two years after the 2008 rice crisis. *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, 26(1–2), 295–311.
- Balié, J., Minot, N., & Valera, H. G. A. (2021). Distributional impacts of the rice tariffication policy in the Philippines. *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 69, 289–306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eap.2020.12.005>
- Borras, S. M. (2001). State–society relations in land reform implementation in the Philippines. *Development and Change*, 32(3), 545–575. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00216>
- Bratsis, P. (2003). *Corrupt compared to what? Greece, capitalist interests, and the specular purity of the state*. The Hellenic Observatory, The European Institute, and the London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Briones, R. M. (2021). Does rice tariffication in the Philippines worsen income poverty and inequality? Philippine Institute for Development Studies, No. 2021–02.
- Brown, E., & Cloke, J. (2004). Neoliberal reform, governance and corruption in the south: Assessing the international anti-corruption crusade. *Antipode*, 36(2), 272–294. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2004.00406.x>
- Brown, E., & Cloke, J. (2005). Neoliberal reform, governance and corruption in Central America: Exploring the Nicaraguan case. *Political Geography*, 24(5), 601–630. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2005.01.008>
- Brown, E., & Cloke, J. (2006). The critical business of corruption. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 2(4), 275–298. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17422040610706622>
- Brown, E., & Cloke, J. (2007). Shadow Europe: Alternative European financial geographies. *Growth and Change*, 38(2), 304–327. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2257.2007.00368.x>
- Brown, E., & Cloke, J. (2011). Critical perspectives on corruption: An overview. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 7(2), 116–124. <https://doi.org/10.1108/1742204111128203>
- Cabacungan, G. C. (2013). DOJ, NBI hit blank wall on ‘David Tan’–De Lima. Inquirer. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/553279/doj-nbi-hit-blank-wall-on-david-tan-de-lima#ixzz8WC7xcpBob> Accessed February 23, 2023
- Carranza, D. (2015). Agrarian reform and the difficult road to peace in the Philippine countryside. Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center-NOREF.
- DA Communications Group. (2019). DA Bulletin No. 1 on Rice: understanding the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) or RA 11203. Rappler.com, <https://www.da.gov.ph/understanding-the-rice-tariffication-law-rtl-or-ra-11203-and-its-ramifications/>. Accessed 20 February 2023.
- Davidson, J. S. (2016). Why the Philippines chooses to import rice. *Critical Asian Studies*, 48(1), 100–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2015.1129184>
- Davidson, J. S. (2018). Rice imports and electoral proximity: The Philippines and Indonesia compared. *Pacific Affairs*, 91(3), 445–470. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2018923445>
- Dawe, D. C., Moya, P., & Casiwan, C. B. (Eds.). (2006). *Why does the Philippines import rice? Meeting the challenge of trade liberalization*.
- de Sardan, J. P. O. (2005). *Anthropology and development: Understanding contemporary social change*. Zed Books. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350218505>
- Dela Pena, K. (2022). Imports’ continuing impact on farmers: like dislocating the kneecaps. Inquirer.net. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1555077/imports-continuing-impact-on-ph-farmers-like-dislocating-the-kneecaps>. Accessed 23 February 2023.
- Department of Agriculture. (2024). New law extends RCEF until 2031, triples budget to boost rice industry modernization. <https://www.da.gov.ph/new-law-extends-rcef-until-2031-triples-budget-to-boost-rice-industry-modernization/> Accessed 31 January 2025.
- Doshi, S., & Ranganathan, M. (2017). Contesting the unethical city: Land dispossession and corruption narratives in urban India. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107(1), 183–199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1226124>
- Doshi, S., & Ranganathan, M. (2019). Towards a critical geography of corruption and power in late capitalism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(3), 436–457. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517753070>
- Elemia, C. (2018). ‘Rice tara-ffication?’ Hontiveros bares Jason Aquino’s corruption in NFA. Rappler.com. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/212760-risa-hontiveros-bares-jason-aquino-corruption-nfa/>
- Fang, A. H. (2016). Linkage between rural voters and politicians: Effects on rice policies in the Philippines and Thailand. *Asia and*

- the *Pacific Policy Studies*, 3(3), 505–517. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.150>
- Franco, J. C. (2008). Making land rights accessible: Social movements and political-legal innovation in the rural Philippines. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 44(7), 991–1022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220380802150763>
- Galvez, D. (2018). Gatchalian: NFA can be abolished when tariffication becomes law. Inquirer. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1053865/gatchalian-nfa-can-be-abolished-when-tariffication-becomes-law#ixzz7ts5IRcJP>. Accessed 20 February 2023.
- Gerring, J., & Thacker, S. C. (2005). Do neoliberal policies deter political corruption? *International Organization*, 59(1), 233–254. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818305050083>
- Goel, R., & Nelson, M. (2005). Economic freedom versus political freedom: Cross-country influences on corruption. *Australian Economic Papers*, 44(2), 121–133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8454.2005.00253.x>
- Graeff, P., & Mehlkop, G. (2003). The impact of economic freedom on corruption: Different patterns for rich and poor countries. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 19(3), 605–620. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0176-2680\(03\)00015-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0176-2680(03)00015-6)
- Haller, D., & Shore, C. (2005). *Corruption: Anthropological perspectives*. Pluto Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18fs7ts>
- Haque, T. H. (2023). The price of peace: public finance institutions and social order in post-conflict countries. PhD, Australian National University.
- Harrison, E. (2006). Unpacking the anti-corruption agenda: Dilemmas for anthropologists. *Oxford Development Studies*, 34(1), 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600810500495915>
- Harrison, E. (2007). Corruption. *Development in Practice*, 17(4–5), 672–678. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469971>
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199283262.001.0001>
- Hindess, B. (2005). Investigating international anti-corruption. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(8), 1389–1398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500336864>
- Hutchinson, F. (2005). *A review to donor agency approaches to anti-corruption*. Asian Pacific School of Economics and Government, Australian National University. February.
- International Fund for Agricultural Development. (2023) Republic of the Philippines country strategic opportunities programme 2023–2028, <https://www.ifad.org/documents/38711624/39485382/Philippines+COSOP+2023-2028.pdf/31d94abd-2842-4b1c-441f-23d8cceb387c?i=1696321168564>. Accessed 4 July 2023.
- Kajsiu, B. (2015). *A discourse analysis of corruption: Instituting neoliberalism against corruption in Albania, 1998–2005*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315564661>
- Klitgaard, R. (1991). Political corruption: Strategies for reform. *Journal of Democracy*, 2(4), 86–100. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1991.0058>
- Krastev, I. (2004). *Shifting obsessions: Three essays on the politics of anti-corruption*. CEU Press.
- Lanzona, L. (2019). Agrarian reform and democracy. *Millennial Asia*, 10(3), 272–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0976399619879866>
- Larmour, P. (1997). Corruption and governance in the South Pacific. In *Canberra, state society and governance in Melanesia* (p. 97/5). Australian National University.
- Lighthart, M. (2010). Whatever you do, never use the c-word: An overview of east Asian anti-corruption research and applications. *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, 1–2, 1–19.
- Macaraig, A. (2014). NBI arrests Bangayan after senate hearing. Rappler.com. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/49572-vice-smuggler-bangayan-arrest/>. Accessed 24 February 2023.
- Mendoza, R. U. & Torres, A. G. (2019). Rice tariffication, good governance, and real food security. Ateneo School of Government Working Paper, 19–003. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3348966>
- Michael, B. (2004). Explaining organizational change in international development: The role of complexity in anti-corruption work. *Journal of International Development*, 16(8), 1067–1088. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.1126>
- Michael, B. (2007). The rise and fall of the anti-corruption industry: toward second generation anti-corruption reforms in Central and Eastern Europe. In *Conference on public integrity and anticorruption in the public service*. Support for Involvement in Governance and Management.
- Michael, B., & Bowser, D. (2009). *The evolution of the anti-corruption industry in the third wave of anti-corruption work*. Konstanz Anti-Corruption conference.
- Nobuhiko, F. (2000). Politics and economics of land reform in the Philippines: a survey. MPRA Paper 23394, Germany, University Library of Munich.
- Ocampo, K. F., & Pobre, K. K. (2021). *Fighting the good fight: The case of the Philippine rice sector*. The Asia Foundation.
- Ohnesorge, J. K. M. (1999). Ratcheting up the anti-corruption drive: Could a look at recent history cure a case of theory-determinism? *Connecticut Journal of International Law*, 14(1), 467–473. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3479395
- Perry, P. J. (1994). Corruption and geography: A fable. *Applied Geography*, 14(1), 291–293. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0143-6228\(94\)90023-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0143-6228(94)90023-X)
- Perry, P. J. (1997). *Political corruption and political geography*. Ashgate.
- Pertiwi, K. (2022). “We care about others”: Discursive constructions of corruption Vis-à-Vis national/cultural identity in Indonesia’s business-government relations. *Critical Perspectives on International Business*, 18(2), 157–177. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cpoib-03-2019-0025>
- Philp, M. (1997). Defining political corruption. *Political Science*, 45(3), 436–462.
- Pillay, S., & Kluyers, R. (2014). An institutional theory perspective on corruption: The case of a developing democracy. *Financial Accountability and Management in Governments, Public Services and Charities*, 30(1), 95–119. <https://doi.org/10.1111/faam.12029>
- Piñol, M. (2021). Philippine rice self-sufficiency could be achieved, believe me! (Food for thought by Manny Piñol). The Mindanao Journal. <https://www.themindanaojournal.com/philippine-rice-self-sufficiency-could-be-achieved-believe-me-food-for-thought-by-manny-pinol/>. Accessed 16 September, 2024.
- Prado, M. M. (2021). Political connections, corruption and privatization: who gains from privatization? In A. Harel & A. Dorfmann (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook on privatization* (pp. 245–262). <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108684330.016>
- Prouse, C. (2021). Articulating corruption of infrastructural upgrading projects in Rio de Janeiro. *Political Geography*, 84(Jan), 102305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102305>
- Querijero, N. J. V. B. & Amorado, R. V. (2006). Transnational civil society movements: the state of anti-corruption efforts. Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. Civil Society and Social Movements Programme, Paper Number 26.
- Rappler.com. (2021). China, Philippines to remain world’s top rice importers. <https://www.rappler.com/business/philippines-china-world-top-rice-importer-2021/>. Accessed 12 February, 2023.
- Republic Act No. 11203. (2018). An act liberalizing the importation, exportation and trading of rice, lifting for the purpose the quantitative import restriction on rice, and for other purposes, (2018, July 23). Philippines.
- Rivas, R. (2021). ‘Naloloka ako’: Cynthia Villar slams agriculture officials over rice cartels. Rappler.com. <https://www.rappler.com/business/cynthia-villar-slams-agriculture-officials-rice-cartels-philippines/>, accessed 20 February 2023.
- Rose-Ackerman, S. (1999). Political corruption and democracy. *Connecticut Journal of International Law*, 14, 363.

- Rose-Ackerman, S. (2007). *Measuring private sector corruption*. U4 Brief. Chr Michaelson Institute.
- Sampson, S. (2010). The anti-corruption industry: From movement to institution. *Global Crime*, 11(2), 261–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17440571003669258>
- Scott, J. C. (1972). *Comparative political corruption*. Prentice-Hall.
- Sutton, W. R., Srivastava, J. P., Rosegrant, M., Valmonte-Santos, R., & Ashwill, M. (2019). *Managing El Niño and La Niña in Philippines' agriculture*. World Bank.
- Szeftel, M. (1998). Misunderstanding African politics: Corruption and the governance agenda. *Review of African Political Economy*, 25(76), 221–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056249808704311>
- Theobald, R. (1990). *Corruption, development and underdevelopment*. Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-20430-4>
- Tolentino, V. B., & de la Pena, B. (2020). *Deregulation and tariffication at last: The saga of rice sector reform in the Philippines*. The Asia Foundation.
- United States Department of Agriculture. (2021). *Philippines first in world to approve golden rice for propagation*. United States Department of Agriculture.
- USDA, International Production Assessment Division. (2024). Country summary. In *Philippines rice area, yield, and production*. Agriculture. <https://ipad.fas.usda.gov/countrysummary/Default.aspx?id=RP&crop=Rice> accessed 14 July 2024
- Villareal, I. (2021) Theory and reality of the tariffication of rice. Ateneo Economics Association. <https://admuaea.org/2019/10/13/theory-and-reality-of-the-tariffication-of-rice/>. Accessed 21 February 2023.
- Wailes, E., & Chavez, E. (2012). *ASEAN and global rice situation and outlook*. Asian Development Bank.
- Walton, G. (2021). Can civic nationalism reduce corruption? Transnational and translocal insights from Solomon Islands. *Political Geography*, 89(Aug), 102422. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102422>
- Walton, G. W. (2013). The limitations of neoliberal logic in the anti-corruption industry: Lessons from Papua New Guinea. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 60(2), 147–164. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-013-9450-1>
- Walton, G. W. (2015). Defining corruption where the state is weak: The case of Papua New Guinea. *Journal of Development Studies*, 51(1), 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2014.925541>
- Walton, G. W. (2016). Gramsci's activists: How local civil society is shaped by the anti-corruption industry, political society and trans-local encounters. *Political Geography*, 53(July), 10–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.01.009>
- Walton, G. W. (2018). *Anti-corruption and its discontents: Local, national and international perspectives on corruption in Papua New Guinea*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315506012>
- Walton, G., & Dinnen, S. (2020). Lost in space? The spatial and scalar dimensions of organised crime in the Pacific. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 61(3), 521–536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12287>
- Warf, B. (2016). Global geographies of corruption. *GeoJournal*, 81(5), 657–669. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-015-9656-0>
- Warf, B. (2019). *Global corruption from a geographic perspective*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03478-8>
- Williams, R. (1999). The new politics of corruption. *Third World Quarterly*, 20(3), 487–489. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713700906>
- World Bank. (2023). Philippines. World Bank. Retrieved 20 February 2023, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/PH>
- You, J. S. (2015). Democracy, inequality and corruption. In *Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines compared*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139939775.003>
- Zúñiga, N. (2018). *Impact of structural adjustment programmes on corruption* (Vol. 26). U4 Helpdesk Answer.

How to cite this article: Walton, G. W., Espiritu-Amador, S., & Deinla, I. (2025). Corruption, economic globalisation, and resistance: Insights from the Philippine rice industry. *Geographical Research*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.70004>