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The Power of Multinational Corporations in the Global Food System: A Critical Analysis of Neoliberal Food Policies

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ABSTRACT

In the closing decades of the 20th century, capitalism emerged as a dominant political belief, advocating for deregulation, commercialisation, privatisation and liberalisation in multiple sectors, including the food industry. This sets a favourable condition for multinational corporations (MNCs), altering the traditional food supply chain into a modern, profit-driven global food system. Using neoliberalism as the theoretical framework, this paper finds that neoliberal food policies have fundamentally shifted our food system. The study seeks to analyse (1) how neoliberal food policies have changed and increased corporate power in the global food scene, (2) the benefits that MNCs have brought about in the food industry, and (3) whether these corporate companies' finances and technologies have helped to address the world food crisis. Even if MNCs have advanced the technological sector, diversified supply chains and developed the economy in host countries, their presence also leads to significant drawbacks, such as land grabbing, widened social inequalities, increased technological dependency, and changed food consumption patterns. This research further discusses the complexities of the neoliberal food framework from a critical perspective, addressing the controversies revolving around globalisation's potential to end world hunger and ensure food security, the flaws of the food pyramid and the influence exerted by MNCs via regulatory bodies. This paper concludes that liberalisation measures significantly impact what is produced and eaten worldwide.

Keywords: *Liberalism, food security, MNCs, globalisation*.

INTRODUCTION

Professor Colin Clark, Director of the Agriculture Economics Research Institute of Oxford University, said, "The world can provide food, fiber and all other agricultural requirements for 28 billion people" (Omotayo, 2020). This statement seems to contradict the influence that multinational corporations (MNCs) have brought to the global food system. Modi (2024) views MNCs as a worldwide enterprise. It is a privately owned or corporate organisation that controls the production of goods and services and value-added goods and services in one country, at least other than its home country.

According to Jones (2005), MNCs are heavily involved in foreign direct investment (FDI) since they operate globally. Caves (1996) further identifies the various types of contracts that wholly owned foreign subsidiaries can enter, comprising equity and non-equity arrangements. Under equity arrangement, firms can share ownership in a joint venture. On the other hand, the non-equity arrangements are more varied: licensing, franchising, consortium or coalition, and cartels. Regarding how multinationals function, first, the companies operate in a complex manner where they have many branches, affiliates, and subsidiaries in host countries. Second, unity of supervision in which MNC will control the activities of its branches in foreign countries and the management will function based

on the policy framework of the parent corporation. Next, MNCs possess sophisticated technology. Lastly and most importantly, the enterprise has a strong marketing strategy that allows it to sell any products it produces and secure competitive international business (Hans, 2020). MNCs have become one of the most powerful forces at the global level due to globalisation (Balj & Maric, 2009; Mukherjee, 2023). Litonjua (2008) believed that neoliberalism is the primary driver of globalisation. The interconnectedness between neoliberalism and MNCs is evident when there is a reduction of government control and an open market economy that creates favourable conditions for MNCs to exploit the markets of host countries.

Peters (2023) and Devinatz (2023) discuss the historical roots of neoliberal policies. In the late 20th century, this approach emerged as a political ideology advocating free-market capitalism: globalisation, deregulation, privatisation, commercialisation, and liberalisation (Eagleton-Pierce, 2016; Aminzade, 2003; Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Agarwal, 2011) to spur economic growth. To this day, neoliberal policies have restructured many sectors, with the food industry being among the most critical. In response, various literature questioning its importance and condemning its implementation worldwide is growing (Brohman, 1995; Saad-Filho, 2008; Plehwe et al., 2007; Clarke, 2012; Buscher et al., 2012). Furthermore, a significant number of social movements challenging the restructuring of the neoliberalism movement have also emerged sharply (Rucht, 2006; Chouhy, 2020; Silva,

In the early context of the global food system, Friedmann and McMichael (1989) discovered that the rise of food regimes spanned from 1870 to 1930 but with a focus on the nations rather than corporate firms. Europe's industrialisation was driven by cheap foods and raw materials from the colonies then. Meanwhile, the United States provided staple foods such as meat and wheat for the European proletariats. The interaction promoted trade relations between colonials and colonies, improved economic growth and eventually shaped eating habits. The Green Revolution took over, introducing developing nations with agricultural economies that relied on subsidised fertilisers, pesticides, irrigation, machinery equipment and high-yielding grains, for instance, wheat, rice and maize (Shiva, 1991). This shift marked the entry of foreign investors who began to dominate small farmers. Finally, from 1980 until the present, the corporate food regime promoted corporations to advance their autonomy and profit interests in the host countries. Notably, the most profitable sectors of the food industry are processed meat, fruits and vegetables, wines, confectionery, dairy products and bakeries. Kraft Foods, Cadbury, Heinz, Nestlé, Food World, DuPont, McDonald's, Pizza Hut, and KFC perfectly illustrate this (Sadiku et al., 2019). For example, Mujtaba (2007) highlighted through global expansion strategies that McDonald Corporation has become one of the world's most successful global food chain restaurants. In India, although there were initial hurdles posed by government regulations and cultural dietary practices due to religious purposes, McDonald's successfully penetrated the market. As of 2023, India is the second highest in Asia after the Philippines, with 581 outlets (McDonald, 2023). This illustrates how a giant food company can leverage opportunities and advance its profit interest in the host country, presented by economic liberalisation from neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism in the global food system does not stop here, as its proponents also address famine. Even neoliberalists believe globalisation may address hunger due to the rising world population. However, it emphasises profit more (Kelbel, 2018) because it replaces subsistence economies with foreign unimpeded trade. This situation challenges the notion of food security and creates other serious issues.

Taking all this into consideration, this paper is organised into several sections. The first segment will deal with how neoliberal ideologies have paved the way for the corporate food business

to set foot and change the landscape in the world food system. Next, it will examine these corporate enterprises' positive impacts on the world food system. Third, the study will discuss how MNCs impose challenges on the sectors involved by emphasising their implications for food security. It is worth noting that this article will not study a specific case study. Instead, it touches on the overall trend observed across different regions and countries to demonstrate that the influence of MNCs on the food system is vast. For discussion, it will provide a contentious debate where the author will challenge the drawbacks of the neoliberal food regime, which deals with the moral issues or dangers of MNCs controlling our food system.

This article tries to answer the following question: How have neoliberal economic policies promoted the operation and expansion of MNCs in the global food sector? How have MNCs positively contributed to the development of the global food system? With the advancement of technology and massive capital financing, do MNCs address world food insecurity or further exacerbate it?

METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

This article uses a qualitative method, as the author collects data from different sources and references. Data from international organisations and regional institutions have also been collected to evaluate the food system. Information will be collected from primary and secondary sources, such as academic articles, books and government reports, policy documents, and reputable news sources, to gather credible and comprehensive data. On the other hand, this research paper will use neoliberalism as a theoretical framework. Since this strand of liberalism deals with free market competition, privatisation, and free trade while reducing government power, it will be contentious to see to what extent this framework applies in the global food system.

RESULTS

The Role of Neoliberal Policies in Concentrating Power

In the early period, our ancestors engaged in agricultural activities for more than 10,000 years, where animals and plants were cultivated. Agriculture has always been an evolving endeavour. People created methods of selective breeding and horticulture. Additionally, diverse agricultural practices have been employed on multiple continents. However, in the past century, due to massive changes resulting from the Industrial Revolution (Jones, 1974) and technological advancements, agricultural activities evolved from humans working closely with nature to utilising agriculture as an essential element to fit within a capitalist system. Hence, industrialised farming changed from small family farms that used human labour to highly mechanised corporate factory farms in the 1900s (Kimbrell, 2002). Apart from that, colonised people were kept technologically backwards unless they directly benefited from colonial powers. For example, logistic networks were built to transport natural resources and trade commodities to the metropolitan state despite these resources coming from colonies, just like how Western power satisfied their demand from Africa for riches in raw materials and food (Parvanova, 2017).

These occurrences have certainly left repercussions. Carola (2012), as cited in Amir (2013), mentions that the effect of farm structures inevitably altered demographics, employment, social structure, and the environment. Even though the industrialisation of agriculture has exponentially increased food production, hunger and malnutrition remain alarming, particularly in many developing countries. This situation is getting worse as population rates increase. Therefore, the Green Revolution

was introduced to address these concerns. The reformation allowed the exportation of Westernized agriculture to resolve the food shortage (Hilde, 1998, as cited in Amir, 2013).

Ameen and Raza (2017) state that this revolution referred to technological, scientific, and research projects from 1943 to the 1970s. In the early years of the 1960s, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundation funded international agricultural research in collaboration with Dr Norman E. Borlaug, the father of the green revolution. (Hazell, 2009). Among the initiatives implemented were the development of high-yielding cereal grains, expanding irrigation infrastructure, and transferring technology from the developed world to emerging economies. Not only that, but the farmers have also received modified versions of seeds, synthetic fertilisers, artificial nutrients and pesticides.

These efforts led to an increase in the production of rice and wheat crops in Latin America and Asia. To prove, based on the report from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (2016), as cited in Yazdani and Ali (2017), within 20 years, the usage of pesticides grew 7 to 8 per cent annually while fertiliser applications rocketed to 360 per cent. The crop productivity increased from 1.4 tonnes per hectare in the 1960s to 2.1 tonnes per hectare in 1989-1991. The irrigation projects showed a one-third increase in the areas involved. The introduction of industrial and mechanised agricultural production paved the way for corporate governance to challenge the status quo of the food system. This is because the revolution quickly adopted the neoliberal policies of liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation for countries where it was implemented (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 2023). Corporate governance refers to practices, laws, and procedures that guide the company's management to coincide with other parties' needs, senior management officials, vendors, government, and society (Bhagat & Bolton, 2019). Banda and Mwange (2023) argued that corporate governance has been a focal issue in developing economies, and the former will gain tremendous significance from trade liberalisation and deregulations of economic sectors. Given this context, it is clear that neoliberal policies have transformed the structure of the food system from a more straightforward framework centred on farmers to a more complex network, engaging multiple stakeholders with different interests.

Although food production achieved high productivity as a direct impact of the Green Revolution, problems of hunger and poverty have yet to be resolved among small farmers, like in Asia (Lipartito, 2004). Only wealthy farmers with enough capital and resources can survive withztechnological change. For example, in India, farmers could not stand the increasing expenditure on farming methods, and later, they were forced to take on substantial debt. When they could not repay, they had to sell their assets to large commercial farmers (Eliazer Nelson et al., 2019). Not only that, over time, the negative consequences of chemical inputs on food production, human health, and the environment have become evident. The analysis made by Shiva (1990) enlightened us that the Green Revolution was exploitative because it gave mega-profits to agrochemical companies, most of whom were Americans. The domestic control over agriculture was slowly removed when national governments heavily subsidised imports of fertilisers, seeds and pesticides via loan agreements from the World Bank and funding from the US Agency for International Development. One of the primary examples will be Monsanto. Monsanto is an American corporation that produces chemical, agricultural and biochemical products. They are the biggest supporters of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that exploit the small farmer and implement industry monopoly (Owens, 2023).

Another vital scenario regarding the liberalisation of agriculture was the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) led by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF's original mandate was to ensure monetary stability in an open world economy. In light of the massive national

debt and the oil crises of the 1970s, the IMF assumed the duties of managing structural adjustment projects. The program is primarily executed in the neocolonial nations and subsequently in the former Soviet Union's Eastern European member countries. Generally, neocolonial nations can be understood as the control of the less developed nations by developed countries. When these states agreed to take an IMF loan, they will then be trapped in specific requirements as what the traditional Bretton Wood system will offer.

Among the conditions is the acceptance of trade liberalisation, which includes economic forms, deregulation implementation, privatisation, and opening local markets to foreign products and investments. Furthermore, almost all donors meant to aid poor countries, such as the World Bank, be it bilateral or multilateral, tied their help to the IMF lending programme (Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, 2023). This means that if the recipient nation fails to abide by the prerequisites mentioned, it will not be eligible for other sources of aid and debt relief (Kovach, 2006). It can be well understood here that once the IMF and the World Bank offer their financial assistance, the borrowing countries will get into the vicious cycle of debt trap and alter their political, economic and social structures. For instance, after the Structural Adjustment Programme was introduced in Africa's economy during the 1980s, its political, financial, and social aspects were restructured. In agriculture, the adjustment program has led to the destruction of food security. Malawi's maize production decreased by 40% in 1992. Conversely, tobacco production doubled because most of the best land was rendered to the latter (Nhema & Zinyama, 2016). It is apparent that neocolonialism, exploiting the resources in third-world countries, can be explained by dependency theory.

These rigid conditionalities will pressurise the macroeconomic sectors of developing countries, including agricultural operations. Because the Green Revolution has been widely spread in third-world countries, high-yielding hybrid seed types are now the cornerstone of the entire output, and four agrochemical companies are mainly in control. Similarly, the worldwide corporate sector dominates the rest of the agricultural inputs.

Cheap agricultural products have begun to disappear in local markets, causing small and landless farmers worldwide to face difficulties in keeping up with the rising costs of farming inputs due to deregulation and privatisation due to global trade liberalisation. A specific feature of SAPs is their ability to boost exports whilst diminishing local demand. This strategy changes the emphasis of agricultural production to exports. Nederveen (2010), as cited in Mekuria (2021), firmly believes that the structural project is one of the developmental models of neoliberalism. Liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation are the crucial economic indicators of the neoliberal theoretical development that slowly open the path for MNCs to set foot in less developed countries.

However, it should also be noted that some countries also implement protectionist policies by imposing tariffs on imported goods. These strategies are employed to protect the domestic market in the agricultural sector. In this case, European countries will be an ideal example. According to Swinnen (2010), Europe's agricultural policies have undergone dramatic changes; whereby in the 1860s, the nations agreed to free trade, but later in the 1960s, they shifted to heavy government intervention and protecting their domestic markets across the continent by introducing Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union to ensure food security and farmers could have a fair living environment. This includes Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland, which have highly protected the agricultural industry.

The above explanation highlights how the Green Revolution policies and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that adopted neoliberal policies have transformed traditional agricultural practices into a more profit-driven food system. These structural changes are relatable to the existence of MNCs in the global food system. This is because once the corporate sector has reformed the modes of production for agriculture by using various types of chemicals, agricultural products will be sold to MNCs in fast food production. The most widely recognised and largest fast-food chain is McDonald's, followed by KFC, an American corporation (Britannica, 2024). The fast-food corporations have indeed transformed the existing order of the global food system.

Different countries have different timeframes and approaches for when and how the fast-food chain has begun, but the crux of the matter is the changes it makes. To illustrate further, based on Hueston and McLeod's (2012) critical study on the food system, they perceived the current global food system as complex and affecting food safety due to multinational food companies. Take a classic cheeseburger as an example. Producing only one cheeseburger requires more than 50 key ingredients that originated from countries on every continent of the world, namely tomatoes, wheat, gluten, processed beef, and vinegar, to name a few. Individual food items now come from many countries. The rising consumer demand for "ready-to-eat" foods has prompted the expansion of quick-service restaurants and fully cooked, frozen dishes that must be reheated, broadening supply chains. The rising demand for fast food has demonstrated the neoliberal food regime in the world food system when the priority is only given to the capital accumulation of the companies at the expense of people's well-being.

In short, this segment has explored how the global food system is being revolutionised from subsistence farming to multinational food firms, driven by neoliberal approaches of deregulation, privatisation, liberalisation, and market competition.

MNC Contributions to the Development of the Global Food System

As the firm internationalises, it builds a network of operations that creates value for the host nations and can be evaluated from several aspects.

Investment

The vast literature discusses the merits of global firms, especially from an economic aspect. Firstly, it cannot be denied that the firms provide capital to developing countries. As Jones (1997) argued, most international economic activities are privately controlled, whereas most transnational operations fall into economics. MNCs have made badly needed capital investments to advance the economy further and help boost the production capacity (Elfstrom, 1991; Pettinger, 2019). As mentioned earlier, they engage primarily in foreign direct investment. It is important to note that the investments made by the corporate firms lead to the development and restructuring of many other sectors of the food system. This can be seen when it changes how foods are produced, processed, sold and purchased (Reardon & Timmer, 2012). The capital helps to build production facilities, such as factories, and people will start to work, contributing to the development of the local supply chain.

Based on the report from Global Data (2024), Nestle has been the most successful and most frequent in expanding their international business between 2019 and 2024. They are actively involved in investment for their subsidiaries, particularly in North America, which received 21.8% from the company. US, Brazil and China are their top three destinations countries that obtained greenfield financing from the company. Greenfield investment means the parent company establishes their

physical presence by providing manufacturing facilities from scratch. Given this condition, it will attract more exports, create more jobs, foster technological spillovers and stimulate economic growth (Assamah et al., 2021). Other leading MNCs that invest highly in the food industry are Dieter Schwarz Stiftung, Cargill, Pepsi and Mars (see Table 1). Many earlier and recent researchers have recognised the importance of direct investment from foreign companies as the fundamental source of technological spillovers (Kugler, 2006), providing information and training to develop human capital, establishing access for the existing market to competitive international marketplace (Stiglitz, 2000; Dunning, 1998; Blomstrom et al., 2003). As a result, foreign direct investment's role in supporting economic advancement will generate employment, reduce poverty and ensure food security (Samdrup et al., 2023).

Table 1: Global Data report on top FDI companies in the food industry

Rank	Top 5 Food Investors
1	Nestle
2	Dieter Schwarz Stiftung
3	Cargill
4	PepsiCo
5	Mars

Source: Global Data Report, 2024.

Supply Chain

Besides capital financing, another critical point to be pointed out is the supply chain (World Benchmarking Alliance, 2020). When multinationals take advantage of workers' raw materials, facilities, and skills, it will considerably impact the local communities' economic development, environment, and earnings. Based on the United Nations Trade, Investment and Development Body (UNCTAD), within two decades, 1990-2013, the developing country's share in global trade increased from 20% to 40% (UNCTAD, 2013). To illustrate further, Cargill, as a US-based MNC, is the perfect example. It is one of the world's largest traders of agricultural commodities. The firm maintains that smallholder farmers contribute around 40% of its palm oil supply. From such a large proportion, Cargill can sustain the livelihood of workers and create sustainable farming practices.

The participation of developing countries in this complex network will reduce poverty by increasing productivity, such as in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Vietnam (World Bank Group, 2020). Africa is also believed to be part of the global supply chain, where the United Nations estimates the continent will be the leading actor in sustainable industries. In addition, the revenues of the 111 largest African companies in the agro-food industry made the sector second after the oil, gas, and fuel industries (Felgenhauer & Labella, 2008). The second supporting evidence to demonstrate how MNCs are resilient in advancing the supply chain is that the company assists coffee farmers in adopting more sustainable ways of farming to ensure production efficiency. They also help the workers by distributing the improved version of coffee seed, around 235 million from 2010 to 2020, to provide farmers grow better quality coffee. This leads to comprehensive standards and supply chain performance locally and globally (Omoegun et al., 2023).

Employment Opportunities

From the growth of the supply chain, MNCs in the food industry have undeniably provided job opportunities (Ronesans Holding, 2023). Gustafson (2018) argues that in numerous developing countries, the food system has become the primary source of employment, enabling it to be an important economic sector. The food system incorporates a wide range of procedures, such as food processing, transportation, and retail, and all these go beyond simply farm agricultural economic production. In support of this finding, based on the World Bank Group (2017) shows that the rapid increase in food system activity by corporations has increased employment worldwide and reduced poverty. The relation can be seen when primary agricultural output is not the only component of the food chain. However, it also concerns distribution, processing, transport, food storage, advertisement and other services that involve many businesses.

This situation will provide substantial employment in manufacturing and service sectors across various countries. For instance, approximately 60% of all jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa and around 70% in low-income nations are in the farming (agriculture sector) that dominates the global employment landscape. Regarding food service, Allen et al. (2018) estimate that this sector will continue to expand by providing more employment opportunities in West Africa in the upcoming years. In affirmation of this report, based on International Labor Organization data, 60% of people who work in agriculture come from low-income countries as compared to middle-income ones who contribute around 40%; the United States meanwhile only accounts for only 11% of the food sector (see Table 2) (Quak & Woodhill, 2019). In the case of Malaysia, based on Statista Research Department (2024), the number of Malaysian employers in the food processing industry increased significantly from 2015 to 2023: 383,000 to 521,000, respectively.

Another interesting piece of supporting evidence that MNCs create job opportunities is that McDonald's launched its Youth Opportunity Program to reduce the barrier to employment among youngsters. Almost one million have joined the training, and McDonald's aims to reach two million people by 2025. Steinberg (2024) observes that this restaurant chain has 41,822 locations worldwide, and McDonald's announced its plan to open another 9,000 by 2027.

Considering these scenarios, Quak and Woodhill (2019) state that employment in agriculture will face a decline in the percentage of total employment for many countries; in the meantime, employment in food services and food manufacturing will sharply increase. Given this initiative, it is evident that people warmly receive MacDonald despite the accusations and claims regarding poor working conditions and low wages (Alfonseca, 2021). To further support the positive impact of multinationals in generating jobs, an observer from Oxford University believes the liberal economist by the name of Paul Krugman and Jeffrey Sachs come up with the term 'sweatshop labour' that explains working in an exploitative condition with low wages is much better than being a worker in a subsistence economy with even lower income (Pettinger, 2019).

Table 2: Job Composition in the Food System in Different Countries

Income Level	Farming	Food Manufacture/Industry	Food Services
Low Income (Eastern and Southern African Countries)	91%	3%	6%
Middle Income (Brazil)	49%	25%	26%
High Income (US)	21%	14%	65%

Source: Townsend et al., 2017, cited in Quak and Woodhill (2019).

Technological Development

The following positive contribution of multinational firms is technological advancement. As discussed in the previous section, the Green Revolution was when the world food system started to employ new technologies and shift away from traditional style. Ameen and Raza (2017) identify the general technology used to improve agricultural techniques from the revolution until today, which helps increase food productivity. First is the utilisation of pesticides. The method permits farmers to grow safe, high-quality foods at affordable prices while preventing contamination. This is to ensure the continuous supply of nutritious foods throughout the year. For instance, grain, milk, protein, fruits and vegetables are always available and affordable.

A study conducted in the US shows that without the usage of fungicides, the production of fruits and vegetables will fall around 50% to 90% (Gianessi & Reigner, 2005). The study is in line with the findings illustrated by the OECD (2012), where, in the absence of pesticides, 26% to 40% of the world's crop yield is lost due to insects and diseases annually. Some pesticides used in the food industry are fungicides to kill the growth of more than 50,000 diseases that kill plant cells and insecticides to kill more than 10,000 plant-eating insects, which can damage the food. Pesticide usage is essential in feeding the world's population as it increases the world's productivity by 20% (Irrig, 2016).

Other than development in agricultural input, the technology also involves agrarian equipment. The machinery used in food production is drones and smart sensors to optimise crop yields. For food production, artificial intelligence and data analytics to streamline the process of food processing, packing and quality control. Meanwhile, food delivery will require digital platforms, mobile apps, the Internet of Things, and social media, to name a few.

The application of these cutting-edge technologies has transformed methods in all stages of the food industry that help to elevate food productivity and efficiency, enhance food security, minimise food waste (Emon, 2023) and empower existing local businesses via technology spillovers (Barge-Gil et al., 2020). Allen (2018) also agrees that digital innovations such as big data and blockchain can change the food systems in the coming years, reducing unemployment via investment in technology, irrigation and mechanisation, and market access. For instance, China's food production in grain and instant food keeps on growing within a span of 10 years, starting from 2009 to 2019, due to technology spillovers (Dou et al., 2023).

In short, the beneficial impacts introduced by multinational companies in the global food industry are indeed spillover in nature. This means that starting from direct investment, it prompts other advantages such as economic growth, supply chain development, employment opportunities, and technological innovation, altering the food system from a traditional to a modern approach. Analysing this situation from a neoliberal framework, the ideology initiates and fully advocates the principles of globalisation that stress the value of deregulation. When governments have minimal power over economic resources, human freedom, choices in the marketplace, and consumers' options are indeed becoming greater. When there is no government intervention, the market will naturally find its equilibrium through privatisation and market competition, by which resources will be allocated efficiently, and the price will reflect the most accurate value that will benefit everyone (Anderson, 1999).

MNC and the Advancement of Technology and Capital Financing

Most of the world's population is now fed by the current food system, from production to consumption. With the help of nitrogen fertilisers and improvements in water irrigation, the amount of food produced for each person has increased by 30% since 1961 (Mbow, 2020). However, according to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the 2023 World Report, roughly 800 million individuals will suffer from hunger globally in 2022, most of which will reside in developing countries. Besides hunger, the report also indicates that 900 million had severe food insecurity, and 2.4 billion people had moderate food insecurity. More than 3.1 billion people cannot consume healthy, nutritious food, and malnutrition affects many children under five (FAO et al., WFP and WHO, 2022). The report portrays a significant fact that the world is facing a food crisis. Therefore, do MNCs remedy the issue or amplify it? It is crucial to acknowledge the concerns ever since multinational firms set foot in host nations up until today.

Land Grabbing

The first issue is the corporate exploitation of land. Based on relatively recent investigations, large-scale investment in land increased sharply due to the food crisis from 2007 to 2008 (Borras et al., 2011; Fairhead et al., 2012; McMichael, 2013; De Schutter, 2011), where foreign investors bought a considerable portion of land to increase the productivity of crops and food supply in low to middle-income countries. Adopting neoliberal strategies to open more free markets without direct supervision from the government has resulted in corporate entities grabbing the land from small farmers. Land grabbing has been closely linked to neocolonialism and imperialism (Margulis et al., 2013).

Elfstrom (1991) has critically analysed the dangers of multinational companies by terming them Leviathans and mammoth corporations when massive commercial projects have caused a substantial disruption towards farmer's resources. The peasants' lands were being taken to realise their ambitious projects. Consequently, the peasants had to be displaced, and, in some cases, they had no opportunity to work while the population relied on imported food instead. The projects absorbed all the valuable resources and workforces with which the nation's economy was negatively restructured.

For example, in the case of Rwanda, a study has shown that there is no compensation for land displacement. Consequently, locals sacrificed their jobs in traditional agricultural activities, forcing them to accept contract farming (Ansoms, 2013). Not only has land grabbing caused economic and social impacts on communities, but it also risks the environment. Yang and He (2021) argue that in their case studies worldwide, 78 cases of land grabbing affect the environment and biodiversity. In northern Laos, banana farming leads to soil and land degradation, including water pollution (Friis & Nielsen, 2016). In Ghana, meanwhile, using pesticides and fertilisers for common crops grown in biofuel plantations, such as sugarcane and soybean, to generate renewable energy sources replacing traditional fossil fuels has tremendously polluted the ecosystem (Adams et al., 2019). To further support the idea that multinational land deals have harmed local food security, a recent study was conducted in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe from 2005 to 2015 (Open Access Government, 2021). They discovered that the plants grown in the area are not nutrient-dense and will be utilised for biofuel production, which diminishes local capacities to produce their food and forces the local population to depend on imported foods instead. Henceforth, the situation will further deteriorate food insecurity among the communities.

Regarding environment and food insecurity in different contexts, Evseeva et al. (2021) have extensively explored the global warming rooted in climate change caused by human activities involving deforestation, transportation, industrial production, garbage dumps and livestock.

Mirzabaev et al. (2023) conducted an ambitious study to link how severe climate change can threaten food security and nutrition. Kerr (2023) further elaborated that climate change is highly likely to decline agricultural productivity, impeding the allocation of food resources, reducing incomes and lowering the nutrient content of some crops, eventually changing the diet quality.

According to University College London and China's Tianjin University scholars, multinational companies' global supply chain activities have led to nearly 20% of carbon emissions fueling climate change. For example, the carbon emissions from the supply chain that produces Coca-Cola products are comparable to the total emissions of food production in China, which feeds 1.3 billion people. This view aligns with findings from another study that argued that one-quarter of greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to the global food system (Mrówczyńska-Kamińska et al., 2021). Scientists have warned that failure to curb this matter will lead to a shortage of food and water. Thus, it can be inferred that the investment made by MNCs in developing countries, be it technological development or finance, will have severe consequences for the world. It appears that emissions in developed countries can be reduced at the expense of burdening the poor countries.

Technological Dependency

The next major hurdle is transnational companies' control over technological advancements. In this section, the discussions can be divided into two contexts. The first one is the application of biotechnology. Bentahar (2023) describes biotechnology as using living organisms or their elements to produce products that benefit humans. Nezhmetdinova (2020) has brought up the key issue of whether our food is safe in the application of biotechnology. The authors further outline the main problem of food safety with biotechnology. First, the quality of food safety is declining, while in contrast, the degree of fear associated with the utilisation of genetic engineering is increasing. Second, the number of GMOs, foods and byproducts such as corn, canola, pumpkin and soybeans are also growing.

The third and most concerning one is that large MNCs are expanding the intellectual property rights of GMOs. The direct implications of this matter are closely related to food safety because when companies invest significant resources in genetic modification, they will seek protection through intellectual property rights to ensure no one can use or replicate their patented technologies, which eventually grants them exclusive control over the use, production, sale and distribution of the GMO crops and seeds. To prove this, let us take Pakistan's story of seed. Seed has been very much politicised and manipulated in Pakistan.

Following the Green Revolution, the conditions imposed by IMF, the World Bank and finally the World Trade Organization (WTO), which brought to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Agreement, the public-private partnership was established in the country promoting the usage of advanced technologies, especially GMOs, including seeds, animal breeds and planting material. This structure has quickly shifted the nature of agriculture from farm-based to laboratory and corporate-based (Bhutani, 2013, as cited in Yazdani & Ali, 2017). Five main MNCs in Pakistan dominate the production of hybrid seeds, such as maize, sunflower, and canola (Rana, 2014). Monsanto, a multiple billion multinational company, is now using GMO food crops to control the food supply in Pakistan. This context goes against Asian ethics and culture, where the people used to grow their food. It is also not environmentally sustainable since it disrupts genetic resources (Asian Human Rights Commission, 2013).

India, similarly, many recent farmers demonstrated their protest towards the corporate sector's technology of GMO cotton, which led them to get stuck in debt and commit suicide (War on Want Organization, 2021). Consequently, seed no longer becomes a natural gift from nature; instead, it has been patented and controlled by MNCs, and farmers now depend on imported food. Thus, the application of biotechnologies has challenged the status of food security and sustainability of the agricultural sector because the crux of the matter here is who owns our seed? What kind of nourishment do we want to preserve for the next generation?

Another technological context that we must consider is the machinery equipment. Briefly, in the eyes of developing countries, technology transfer is a significant contribution of multinational enterprises (MNEs). A country must learn and develop new skills, knowledge, institutions, and government policies to build its technology. This process is uncertain, ambiguous and risky since the role of corporate companies in advancing technology is far from clear. The positive role of MNEs in transmitting cutting-edge knowledge and providing skills and machinery equipment is acceptable. However, underneath the interaction, MNEs do not involve technological capabilities in the host nations as the advanced and know-how expertise is not diffused and absorbed properly in its practice (Lall, 1993).

For example, corporate firms may initially employ foreign workers to facilitate learning. Still, ultimately, their economic interest is to maximise profits by utilising and exploiting cheap workers to take control of all tasks. Over time, to ensure efficiency and cost-effective operations, firms have deployed a strategic approach to balance this. They adjust and tailor technologies to suit local capabilities while locals continuously update MNCs regarding technological progress.

To further support this assertion, Slimane et al. (2016) argue that the positive spillovers from MNCs depend on the capability of the host countries to adapt with tangible and intangible resources with which how local workers and government authorities are involved. The situation has rendered the host country dependent on them, hindering local skills from developing and working independently. Hence, the host country will never be able to build its proficiency because it relies on MNCs for updates and improvements. The impact may not be inherently harmful. Instead, it becomes a significant hurdle for the participating country to navigate the complexities of technological procedures (Lall, 1993). Therefore, relating to the given context of food security, the inability of local workers to act independently will affect the resilience of the local food system and make it more prone towards crisis.

Social Inequalities

Third, the diverse economic situation introduced by these external entities in the food system has led to worker inequalities regarding wages and access to necessities. Even though Kaplinsky (1993) recognises that developing countries have achieved significant economic growth rates, the contributing factors behind this growth are long working hours and low wage rates, which have caused those countries to become the lowest-cost producers. The author generally mentioned that the earnings were extremely low. In most cases, the workers' wages were inadequate to sustain a labourer's family. Besides, it can only support their life to the extent of a reduced lifespan, and they are prone to diseases. In an earlier study done by Dhanagare (1987), the economic condition of poor peasant families in India was evident. As a result, children did not have enough resources to enable them to grow productively, and their parents could never enjoy a satisfying life, at least the way they used to be before MNCs arrived.

The issue of payment has become a serious challenge to the host nations because one of the key aspects claimed by transnational corporations of this agricultural development program is to preserve human life and address world hunger. In contrast, the reality is that corporate managers will always target countries that can offer low wage rates because they are accountable to the members of the enterprises who are profit-oriented, as in the case of India (Kumar et al., 2020). In the worst-case scenario, the companies may shift the issue of wages to the claim that they are the primary source of positive development, such as jobs, technology and capital and are not accountable for poverty problems in host countries.

Regarding resources, Schaffnit-Chatterjee (2010) highlights that the success of the agribusiness corporation is heavily dependent on the success of the small farmers; even so, the small farmers are manipulated by not having adequate access to survive—for example, land, water, machinery, risk-management framework and low-interest loan or credit. In India, only wealthy farmers could enjoy the resources and facilities from the colonial power during the Green Revolution period (Dhanagare, 1987). Thus, the scale and complexity of agricultural operations will distort the local economy and threaten ordinary people's income source. The cycle will continue, and it will not stop enabling the agribusiness to operate comfortably and profit the companies. To a certain extent, the author would regard this as the curse of technological advancement with the aim of material interest.

Consumption Behaviour

Aside from low wages pressuring the farmers to survive, analysts are growing concerned about the rapid expansion of fast-food chains belonging to food corporations, threatening food security (Smith et al., 2022; Omari & Frempong, 2016). The world is facing a shift in dietary and nutrition patterns due to urbanisation and globalisation (Mendez & Popkin, 2004). As big multinational food corporations introduced fast-food restaurants, people's lifestyles drastically changed. The traditional local diet has been replaced with the modern Western diet. The nutrition transition due to fast-food consumption occurs in low- and middle-income countries and high-income countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia (Janssen et al., 2018). Numerous research has shown the hidden dangers of fast-food consumption towards physical health (Bahadoran et al., 2015; Poti et al., 2014; Pereira et al., 2005) and mental health (Ra, 2022; Noor et al., 2021; Chang & Nayga, 2010; Xu et al., 2020). The rapid expansion of fast-food outlets has been directly linked to the increased consumption of food with high sugar and numerous ingredients that are used to preserve processed foods.

According to the World Health Organization and nutritional bodies, fresh fruits, vegetables, and nuts are healthy. At the same time, excessive salt and deep-fried food, including excess sugar, are the cause of the disease (Fuhrman, 2018). Moreover, excessive calorie intake will shorten the lifespan of an individual. There is also a lot of evidence that categorises refined carbohydrates, sugar, honey, and highly processed wheat which can lead to dementia, mental health problems, being overweight and diabetes (Sommerfield et al., 2004; Sánchez-Villegas et al., 2012). Fuhrman (2018) terms this subtle threat, the 'Fast Food Genocide,' to vividly illustrate how far fast food could have detrimental impacts on the world's population.

The thorough discussions above regarding land exploitation, technological control and dependency, low wages and rapid expansion of fast-food chains have become prime evidence to recognise that MNCs do not address the world food crisis. Instead, they further deteriorate our food system. We should place the blame for this on neoliberalism. It is rooted in the global economic shocks

in the 1970s and 1980s that paved the way for the corporate food regime, expanding neo-liberal capitalist ideology until today.

The big corporations have a significant amount of capital coupled with alternative investment funds, enabling those companies to operate in speculative activities with a lack of clarity in countries of the Global South, resulting in food insecurity while expanding their sales. What do we have left, then? It is a nutrient-poor type of food with low bioavailability. In short, the reality is quite different. Rather than delivering the anticipated benefits with the existence of capital and technology, the liberalisation of agriculture is simply a monopoly by the agrifood business corporations that consistently seek to maximise profits, leaving serious repercussions on social and economic aspects.

It can increase crop production despite introducing the latest technology in host countries. Still, it comes with other repercussions, such as land grabbing, social inequalities, technological dependency and environmental degradation, harming food security. Gradually, with the hype from the force of globalisation and the reduction of government intervention, MNCs have evolved with different investment strategies and approaches, changing peoples' food preferences towards fast food, which disrupts the key pillars of food security worldwide. Countries that adopt protectionism policies and support local farmers may have shown greater capacity to navigate these adverse effects.

DISCUSSIONS

We have acknowledged the power of MNCs under neoliberalism in constructing and restructuring the world food industry and system, challenging the status quo and driving significant transformation in the agricultural sector, food production and consumption behaviour. Bearing this caveat in mind, this section will then assess the dilemma of neoliberal food policies from a critical perspective.

The first controversy of the neoliberal approach is the belief that globalisation can end world hunger (Kelbel, 2018). As previously mentioned, neoliberalists always uphold the power of economic globalisation. The countries can effectively create supply and demand for goods and services by freeing the market and welcoming the private sector. In other words, by removing barriers such as tariffs and reducing government intervention among nations, market forces can further advance the global economy in various industries and establish a positive spillover effect. When it comes to food, productivity is the key.

However, as Kutlu (2016) argued, food security is not a matter of production. Instead, it is a matter of distribution. The neoliberals often blame the food crisis on rapid population and scarcity of resources, but underneath, it is a matter of equality. The supporting evidence can be seen from the production pattern in the last few decades. Even though food production has increased consistently, and the global population has slowed down, there is still a significant number of hungry people worldwide, from 700 million to 800 million in 1986 and 1998, respectively. Suppose the world indeed faces a food shortage. Why do countries with limited transnational corporate food consume nearly 700 more calories and 20 grams more protein per person than nations with a significant presence of corporate food firms, as Wimberley (1991) explored? The famine in North Darfur will be an ideal example to illustrate that globalisation can end world hunger, but this is not the case (Young et al., 2005). When the area had undergone profound food insecurity, why were no interventions from the multinational companies? Could the absence be attributed to the nature of this area as a conflict zone? Or do MNCs require a stable environment where profit can be mainly generated?

Additionally, based on the recent Committee on World Food Security report, we have adequate food supply to feed 1.5 times the world's population. This means we can feed 10 billion people while the world population is now only around 7 billion. The productivity of the crops is surprisingly concentrated at 80% among the small family farmers from the world's poorest region (FAO**,** 2023). This data illustrates an essential note to us that the problem is never about too much population and less production. Instead, it is due to the distribution of food itself and extreme poverty (Yasmeen, 2022). The food policies from neoliberalist supporters seem to have reserved a significant portion for the MNCs to exercise their power in controlling our world food system. Thus, the author strongly criticises neoliberal policies that always emphasise corporate interest over sustainable and equitable food distribution; instead of ending hunger, MNCs promote hunger.

Secondly, whenever we debate the food crisis and food security, it is never about hunger per se; instead, it involves a healthy, nutritious meal (Yasmeen, 2022). Peng and Berry (2018) define food security as a state where everyone has social, financial and physical access to enough wholesome food that complements their dietary needs and food choices for a healthy life. The World Bank stipulates that nearly 50% of the world population (3.1 billion) could not have or afford a healthy diet in 2021 (FAO, 2023).

The average cost of a healthy diet is higher in low-to-middle-income countries than in higher-income countries. For example, the cost is higher in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia than in Northern America and Europe. This is due to the spike in food prices that prevents people from enjoying a healthy lifestyle. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) believes that significant price differences between healthy and unhealthy foods, especially in developing countries, have led to rising cases of obesity (Beccio, 2023). Talking about obesity, Patel (2012), as cited in While (2020), extensively uncovers the drawbacks of neoliberal governance in the food system by questioning how it is possible to have widespread food deprivation and chronic obesity in one global food system.

Referring to the Global Hunger Index in 2023, the Central African Republic, Lesotho, Niger, Madagascar, South Sudan, Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Somalia have acute food crises, while in another 34 countries, hunger is severe (Geza & Ndlovu, 2023). In another paradox, the report from the World Obesity Atlas predicts that obesity and overweight will affect 4 billion people globally by 2035. This data shows an increase of more than 12% compared to previous obesity cases in 2020, which is 2.6 billion. Is this an accident? Comparing across the level income group, the prevalence of obesity among adults in low-income countries is expected to double from 2020 to 2035, while the high-income countries show the most extraordinary obesity prevalence levels of any income group (World et al., 2023).

Reflecting upon this data, isn't it odd and paradoxical? It seems contradictory while having the same pattern of food supply chain. What else could it be other than our global food system is centrally aligned with the neoliberal ideology that focuses on the capital at the stake of others? To further support this argument, one should look at the obesity trend. Zobel et al. (2016) contend that the driving force of the international food production and distribution system causes the obesity pandemic worldwide. For example, fast food restaurants and supermarkets have changed our dietary patterns to highly processed food, refined carbs and sugar. Not only that, but using chemicals such as food additives, fertilisers, and pesticides has also disrupted our metabolism. Researchers and analysts have viewed this situation as how neoliberalism made us fat (Rubinstein, 2014; Schrecker & Bambra, 2015; Schorb, 2022; Harjunen, 2021).

The first piece of evidence shows that nations adopting the neoliberal approach have recorded the highest prevalence of obesity, such as the high-income world, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, as per earlier evidence from the World Obesity Atlas 2023. Second, multinational food corporations' operations and marketing strategies of multinational food corporations have expanded widely throughout the globe, particularly in developing economies where unimpeded trade has abolished barriers (Schrecker & Bambra, 2015). Does this not depict how the neoliberal food regime ensures substantial profits through MNCs?

From the global obesity epidemic, the following criticism of neoliberal policies is how the theory shapes our beliefs, culture and values towards food. Fast food is not just food; it is beyond that, our lifestyle and our culture. How do neoliberals change our perception and our interactions regarding food? As an illustration, in the beginning, our ancestors primarily consumed raw foods cultivated by their own hands, preferring a slow cooking method to ensure the cleanliness and nutrient density of the food. The food also lacks artificial flavours, additives and chemical fertilisers. This reflects our cultural norms about food. However, our food landscape underwent radical transformations with the coming of industrialisation and revolution and neoliberal principles promoted privatisation, commercialisation, deregulation, market competition, and trade liberalisation.

With significant capital injection, mechanisation and food technologies have been introduced to meet the demand of the 'growing population' and to address the problem of 'scarcity', fostering a new culture and norms of haste to serve the interest of the big food corporations. Over time, the profound shifts gave rise to corporate food regimes characterised by the fast-food industry. Nestle serves as an ideal example of this. With the strategic slogan of 'Good food, Good life', the multi-trillion-dollar company aims to increase their sales in 'nutritious products' by 2030 with CFH 20-25 billion, helping people enjoy a balanced diet (Nestle, 2023). In the meantime, the world's largest food company has been criticised by the Executive Officer of one non-governmental organisation based in the United Kingdom, questioning whether the mission can be achieved since 75% of Nestle's global sales were unhealthy foods consisting of high-fat, salt and sugar (Ridler, 2024).

In the author's opinion, Nestle has successfully shaped the norms and culture of billions of people toward food, coercing individuals to be conditioned by attitudes to opt for quick and effortless meal preparation, such as cereals and oatmeal. Consequently, modern people no longer regard real food as food but as a stringent diet. They perceive food as high sugar, deep-fried, flavorful, and colourful. This paradigm shift portrays how neoliberal frameworks facilitated by MNCs fundamentally challenge societal perceptions of food consumption and preparation.

Other than that, the critique towards neoliberal food policies can be examined through the exertion of influence from big food corporations towards regulatory bodies, in other words, lobbying. The influence made by the big food corporations on governing agencies is through massive funding. This interaction enables food products and foods not aligned with optimal health standards to be endorsed and encouraged to eat. Let us take the food pyramid to illustrate. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) invented the food guide pyramid to provide dietary guidelines for Americans, helping them to maintain a balanced diet. It is widely taught in schools and news articles and was illustrated on cereal boxes and food labels.

Unfortunately, the food pyramid is flawed, with information not indicating how to eat healthily. For instance, Americans were advised to eat high carbohydrates, low proteins and low fats (Morrison, 2018). Consequently, it changed peoples' dietary patterns and created adverse health

outcomes because they overconsumed refined carbohydrates and sugars but with low consumption of healthy fats, contributing to the obesity crisis. Alternatively, USDA improvised the food guide pyramid to MyPyramid with a new symbol. Still, it is just the inverted version of the previous pyramid, which again does not articulate adequate information for people to make the right choice for their long-term health. Hooper and Heighway-Bury (2001), as cited in Harvard School of Public Health Department of Nutrition (2012), reveal the creation of a food pyramid involves multiple stakeholders, consisting of USDA scientists, nutritionists, advisors and even food lobbyists (Nestle, 1993). It would not have considered the business agenda if it was for the public good.

Moreover, another recent controversy is when the top 20 nutritionists appointed by the Department of Health and Human Services and USDA themselves deny the fact that ultra-processed food is the cause of obesity (Daily Mail, 2024). Nine members of those nutritionists are found to have relations with Nestle, Pfizer, Coca-Cola, the National Egg Boards and other food industry lobbies. More research is required to produce conclusive evidence. Given this circumstance, the relationship between giant food corporations and healthcare providers has been described elsewhere (Reese et al., 2024; Carriedo et al., 2022). For example, General Mills, PepsiCo and Coca-Cola have been found to finance the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), especially early career nutritionist and their research and intervention. Statement opinions, ultimately shaping their internal policies, favour corporate partners (Carriedo et al., 2022). To further consolidate the drawbacks of neoliberalism, big food companies also have ties with big pharmaceutical companies.

A quintessential example is Nestle, which purchased Prometheus Laboratories for $1.1 billion, a company that helps doctors diagnose gastrointestinal diseases, such as colon ulcers and inflammatory bowel diseases. Nestle has also bought CM & D Pharma Ltd, a United Kingdom-based company that produces chewing gum for kidney patients waiting for its commercialisation (Thomasson, 2011). Thus, the interplay among corporate food companies, regulatory bodies and large pharmaceutical firms underlines the impact of the neoliberal doctrines that put corporate profits and monetisation above public health.

The final scrutiny is that the institution constructed during the neoliberal era favours MNCs. The institutions operate according to agribusiness interests by creating dependency on developing countries (Kutlu, 2016). For instance, Grameen Bank, a microfinance institution in India, collaborated with Monsanto in 1998. This partnership created a favourable market condition for Monsanto to sell their products to small farmers instead of teaching them the know-how and knowledge to build sustainable farming practices. Due to this, MNCs were able to expand and monopolise the national market. In another dependency context, given the trade liberalisation, the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) and Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) were made by the WTO.

TRIPS was created to protect intellectual property rights (knowledge and creativity) among members related to trade. TRIMS will ensure the regulation of investment measures that may impact the exchange of goods and services. Both were found to function in parallel with the objective of Monsanto, which goes in tandem with the international agricultural demand to permit natural life to be commodified and patented through GMOs. The property rights of using fertile seeds initially used by local farmers were then transferred to MNCs. Therefore, MNCs can monetise agricultural knowledge, including biodiversity (Schanbacher, 2010). Besides, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) also treat food producers, primarily small-scale poor farmers and consumers, as important economic agents to work for capitalist corporations. FAO perpetuates an imbalance of

power by forcing poor countries to rely on the developed nations and their corporations by partnering with CorpLife International, the world's largest agrochemical company (Pesticide Action Network Europe, 2021).

The exploitative relationship will prevent sustainable development and highlight corporate profit over the well-being of communities in developing countries. The author believes international institutions function primarily by serving corporate motives, making them more powerful. However, they often invoke discourse about freedom and consumer choice to obscure these strategic motivations. Thus, Hathaway (2020) posits that various institutional frameworks of neoliberalism at a global scale have continuously advocated the growth of corporations, providing them with additional rights, enabling new corporate structures, and minimising their responsibilities.

To sum up, the above discussion strongly supports critical perspectives of multinational food companies operating and shifting the global food system under neoliberal governmentalities, pinching all parties in the host nations. The evaluation of this issue is centred around market capitalism, showing the failure and weakness of neoliberalism that its supporters need to discover because their objective is only to maximise revenues through market competition, privatisation, state deregulation, and capitalisation. The ideology advocates strategically manipulating narratives of rising population, scarcity, and zero hunger to prioritise food production.

When circumstances deteriorate due to their strategic unfeasible practices, another story emerges- sustainable practices have become global commitments. The world community is accountable for eliminating hunger and poverty, responsible for utilising natural resources, and obliged to promote a healthy life. All these occurrences are the impacts of globalisation, penetrated by neoliberal tenets. The discussions reveal a critical lesson to the readers: the disparity between theoretical construct and practical application is broad, as noted by (Nye, 2008). We are deeply conditioned until we are utterly blind to the illusion of corporate interest. As Best (2022) said, in the real world, theoretical blind spots are embedded in crucial policy practices.

In essence, the article has drawn attention to the problems of food security brought about by neoliberal food policies under neoliberalism. The effect of the force of globalisation from this ideology permitted capitalism to reconfigure the global food system-starting from producing, processing, distributing, and consuming food worldwide. MNCs' lack of effective administration further exacerbated fundamental human needs, forcing people to lead unhealthy lifestyles with or without realising them. Throughout the period, people become dependent on drugs and medications because of metabolic diseases.

CONCLUSION

MNCs have indeed reconfigured our global food system under the influence of neoliberalism. To spur global economic efficiency, the advocates of neoliberalism fight for deregulation, commercialisation, privatisation and liberalisation. This ultimately forces nations, particularly emerging and underdeveloped ones, to open and free trade. The national government seems to no longer have the power to control the non-state actors internationally because the neoliberal ideology aims to reduce the state power and revoke social welfare, which was later adopted as public policy. This paradigm shift has resulted in private food companies and individuals operating their businesses freely, irresponsibly and authoritatively, slowly swallowing our traditional food supply chain and replacing it with a modern, advanced and complex one involving many entities with monetisation interests.

Governments have made revolutions and transformations to set forth new structures, new agendas and new developments in accommodating the autonomous preference of big food corporations in their countries, directly affecting periphery nations to adopt similar policies. The current generation can no longer determine what type of food they can consume because access to food has become challenging due to corporate centralisation. Even in supermarkets, we are bombarded with numerous unhealthy options from large food corporations that use strategic marketing to attract consumers with slogans promising quick, fast, healthy meals. The existence of fast-food corporations poses an even greater risk to this issue. In the end, the neoliberal food regime controls what we grow and what we eat. As Rousseau sensationally said in his opening of Social Contract, "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains".

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