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**Development Aid and Women's
Empowerment: A postcolonial feminist
analysis of US aid to the Philippines**

**發展援助與女性賦權：以美國對菲律賓
援助之後殖民女性主義分析為例**

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摘要：

本論文旨在透過訪談與次級資料分析探討美國開發總署提供給菲律賓的農業發展計畫對該國從事農業相關勞務工作之女性的影響，試圖探究這些農業發展計畫有助於女性賦權或甚至反過來讓女性更為弱勢。本研究採取後殖民女性主義框架進行分析，因為後殖民女性主義有助於同時批評地檢視殖民遺緒的影響與後殖民國家父權結構對性別平等之影響，以期藉由本研究針對美國對外發展援助計畫對受援國女性之影響的相關討論，包括發展研究學術界、在地與國際發展援助機構對發展與性別、發展援助與性別之討論與政策制訂有所貢獻。具體地說，後殖民女性主義分析框架一方面有助於我們批判地檢視美國在菲律賓進行之農業發展援助計畫是否仍舊帶有類似殖民的影響，以及這些計畫是否以及如何影響菲律賓女性。根據本研究分析結果，儘管美國開發總署的提供給菲律賓的農業發展援助計畫實行的結果，能夠使參與計畫的個別菲律賓女性感受到賦勸，這些計畫並無法適切地改變或該國經濟結構對女性壓迫的本質。

關鍵詞：後殖民女性主義, 資本主義, 帝國主義, 殖民主義, 發展援助

Abstract

Through interviews and secondary data analysis, this thesis seeks to examine the impacts of USAID agricultural development projects on Philippine women, focusing on analyzing if these projects empower or disempower these women. A postcolonial feminist framework is adopted in this research to critically examine the impacts of the United States' colonial legacy in the Philippines regarding USAID agricultural development projects and the patriarchal structure already existing in the country. This research is therefore expected to contribute to discussions about the impact of donor countries/ agencies on women and gender equality in recipient countries, including discussions centering on development and gender, development aid and gender equality, and policy debates among practitioners of development aid agencies. This thesis concludes that while USAID agricultural development projects have the ability to make individual women feel empowered, these projects are not able to adequately change or challenge the underlying economic structures that oppress women.

Key Words: postcolonial feminism, capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, development aid

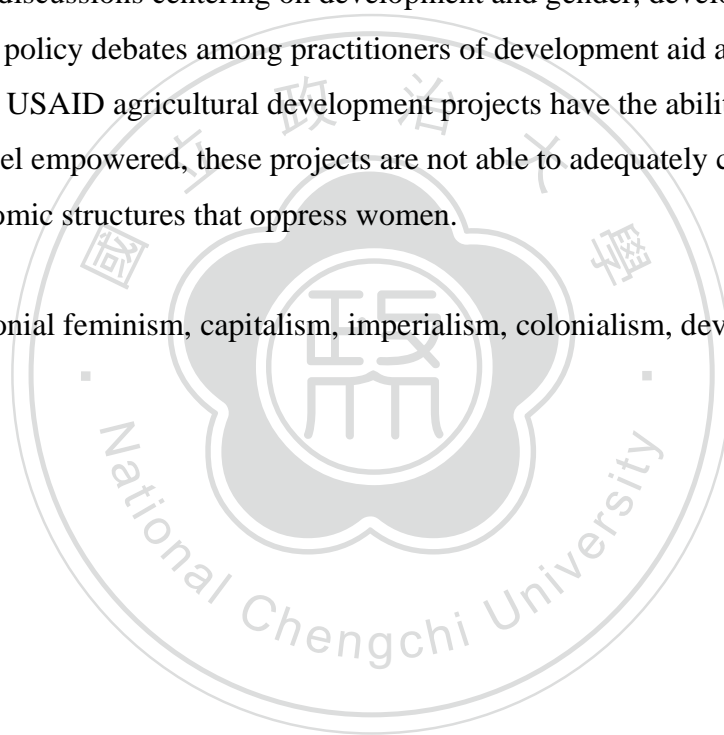


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Abbreviations (in order of appearance)

USAID: United States Agency for International Development
NGO: non-government organization
CSO: civil society organization
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
SANREM: Sustainable Agriculture and National Resource Management
GDF: Gender Dimensions Framework
CARL: Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988
GROW Coop: Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives
LRO: Local Resource Organization
CANIFA: Canfabi Integrated Farmers' Association
PCCP: Philippine Cold Chain Project
HW/GE: Human Welfare/Gender Equity
SEAFDEC: Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center
BFAR: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Philippines
SFMPs: Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan
KDEs: Key data element
eCDT: Electronic catch documentation and traceability
BAWP: Bicol Agri-Water Project
SURGE: Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity
FY: Fiscal Year

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Chapter One: Introduction

Research Background

Development aid and gender issues are inherently linked; we cannot discuss the possibility for sustainable development without also addressing issues of gender inequality. As Kothari points out in “Feminist and postcolonial challenges to development”, development aid has historically had a masculine bias, prioritizing formal economic activity while ignoring the informal (Kothari, 2002: 35-41). Because women’s roles have traditionally been in the house and in childrearing, unpaid forms of labour, their contributions to their household and society at large have been rendered invisible, concealing women’s concerns and marginalization (Ibid.: 41). Northern aid institutions’ implementation of a neoliberal approach to development aid, using policies such as trade liberalization, state enterprise privatization, microfinancing schemes, or providing income generating opportunities (Kwiatkowski, 2005, Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002), assumes that helping poor people become ‘productive’ will uplift them when in fact these actions “prioritize institutional sustainability [and] does not adequately focus on the viability of, and protective strategies for, the often-vulnerable small enterprises”. By not adequately addressing gender inequality, developed countries’ foreign aid projects have oftentimes had negative impacts on the very population it was supposed to help (Milgram, 2005: 373). This thesis aims to investigate if USAID development projects in the Philippines follow this ‘northern aid paradigm, or if their projects are able to adequately empower Philippine women.

This study uses the Philippines as the site of inquiry because as a former US colony, the Philippines has directly felt US influence and control. Therefore, tracing postcolonial influence will be more clear and observable. Within the Southeast Asian region, the US gives the most amount of development aid to the Philippines, with 2022 obligations of 149.21 million USD (Vietnam is second in the region with the obligation of 83.12 million USD) (World Population Review). In the Philippines, agriculture is a vital source of income for many rural households and most agricultural workers are women, so this thesis further focuses on women working, formally and informally, in agriculture. In 2021, the current dollar amount of USAID funded

projects in the Philippines was \$4,230,031 (ForeignAssistance.gov).¹ Table 1 shows USAID funding in top sectors from 2019-2021, which does not include the Agricultural Sector.

Table 1: USAID Development Aid in the Philippines

Year	Top USAID Activities	Amount USD	Top Sectors
2019	Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative (MSI) - Maritime ISR Improvements	\$65.91M	\$232M - Conflict, Peace, and Security \$60.29M - Government and Civil Society \$20.28M - Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning
	DOD - Foreign Military Financing (FMF) Program, Payment Waived	\$65.82M	
	Global Train and Equip Program	\$25.61M	
2020	DOD - Foreign Military Financing (FMF) Program (Payment Waived: \$129.156 million)	\$129.2M	\$183.3M - Conflict, Peace, and Security \$52.65M - Government and Civil Society \$31.98M - Basic Health
	Global Train and Equip Program - Global Train and Equip (GTE) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 333	\$18.96M	
	Base Award - Pacific American Fund	\$14.41M	
2021	Family Planning (FP) Innovations and Capacity Building Platforms	\$13.53M	\$28.71M - Basic Health \$24.3M - General Environmental Protection \$19.34M - Government and Civil Society
	USAID redacted this field in accordance with the exceptions outlined in the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016	\$11.28M	
	Energy Secure Philippines Activity	\$8.138M	

Source: ForeignAssistance.gov, 2019-2021.

As a supporter and user of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), #USAFORSDGS (United Nations Foundation), the US government strives to follow the 17 SDGs to achieve sustainable development both locally and globally. SDG #5 specifically focuses on issues of gender equality and is the main SDG that this thesis addresses. Foreign aid can oftentimes be used as a tool to pursue self-interests, and because the US transitioned into the global power after WWII (Spivak and Young, 1991), it is essential to question and critique US aid motives and results to ensure that their development aid is not being manipulated to pursue their interests and maintain their hegemonic power.

¹ Search Foreignassistance.gov, then chose Philippine's country profile. Scroll down to Activities, search Agriculture.

As a marginalized population, women feel the most negative effects of ill-conceived or ill-planned foreign aid. USAID states that the Philippines, as the oldest democracy in Southeast Asia, is a long time ally and thus holds a key position in the Indo-Pacific as a US partner for promoting sustainable and inclusive development in the region (USAID). Since USAID claims to follow the SDGs, then solving gender inequality should be a main goal in achieving sustainable development in the Philippines.

While analyzing gender relations in a previously colonized country, it is essential to recognize the intersections of colonialism and gender inequality. US colonial influence and institutions still exist in the Philippines, such as through Filipinia labor (Gonzalez, 2007), making it an important site for inquiry into the intersections of colonialism and postcolonialism of modern US aid and its impact on Philippine women. As Gonzalez pointed out, “The gendered violence of American foreign policy and globalization, after all, continues to be lived out, negotiated, and unsettled in the bodies and spaces of ostensibly former colonial experiments” (Gonzalez, 2007: 54). Postcolonial feminism connects postcolonial institutions with feminism by focusing on the voices of subaltern, or marginalized, Third World women and their oppression under globalized capitalism and liberalism (Mohanty, 1984, Sylvester, 1999, Sa’ar, 2005). Postcolonial feminism is essential for focusing on issues of ‘voice’ and listening to marginalized women.

Agriculture in the Philippines

In 2019, there were 7.46 million men employed in agriculture and 2.24 million women. Men made up 28.7% of agricultural workers while women comprised 13.6%. For both men and women, the proportion of agriculture employment to the total employment exhibited a downtrend from 2015 to 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). All regions experienced a decline in men agricultural workers except in Barmm, while the number of women agricultural workers also dropped in all regions except for in NCR, Ilocos Region, Calabarzon, Bicol Region, Central Visayas, Northern Mindanao, and Soccsksargen. 33.6% of wage and salary workers worked for private households, private establishments, or own family-operated farm/business. The percentage of unpaid family workers increased from 13.4% in 2018 to 14.1% in 2019 of total agricultural employment. The country’s average basic wage and salary paid to agricultural sector workers increased to PhP 247.81 per day in 2019 from PhP 237.38 in 2018. It increased

yearly by an average of 6.0 percent growth from 2015 to 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020).

**Table 2: Philippine Women and Men Labour Participation Statistics 2020
(modeled ILO estimate)²**

Gender	Labour Force Participation Rate	Vulnerable Employment	Wage and Salaried Workers	Self-employed	Contributing family workers	Labour force participation: basic education
Women	46.2%	37.22%	60.22%	39.78%	8.284%	45.53%
Men	73.24%	29.48%	66.16%	33.84%	3.795%	79.14%

Source: Trading Economics

As can be seen in Table 2, more women are self-employed, can be considered contributing family workers compared to men, are more likely to be a vulnerable worker, and are less likely than men to be wage or salaried workers. This is most likely due to the gendered divisions in paid and unpaid labor in the Philippines, and the obstacles women face when they are involved in paid forms of labor.

² See Appendix Table 2 for corresponding figure

The “Trends in Agricultural Wage Rates, 2017-2019” report by the Philippines Statistics Authority (2020) conducted surveys of 5,579 sample households who hired farm workers, particularly farming the four major crops: palay, corn, coconut, and sugarcane.

Table 3: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region (in pesos)

Region	Men (pesos)	Women (pesos)	Difference (pesos)
Philippines	335.00	304.60	30.4
CAR	313.35	289.92	23.43
Ilocos Region	359.31	339.78	19.53
Cagayan Valley	356.53	338.58	17.95
Central Luzon	353.31	348.39	4.92
Calabarzon	399.66	392.43	7.23
Mimaropa Region	412.19	329.78	82.41
Bicol Region	335.92	312.69	23.23
Western Visayas	307.33	301.62	5.71
Central Visayas	287.40	251.55	35.85
Eastern Visayas	310.01	306.27	3.74
Zamboanga Peninsula	284.13	263.44	20.69
Northern Mindanao	281.09	277.13	3.96
Davao Region	330.29	367.93	-37.64
SOCCSKSARGEN	301.97	278.05	23.92
Caraga	342.35	340.70	1.65
Barmm	296.55	288.33	8.22

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority. Trends in Agricultural Wage Rates, 2017-2019. 2020.

As can be seen by Table 3 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020), overall in the Philippines women farmers earn 30.40 pesos less than men. Only one out of the sixteen regions, the Davao region, have women earning a higher, 37.64 more pesos, than men. This could be due to women having a higher share of employment in the agriculture trading subsector in the Davao

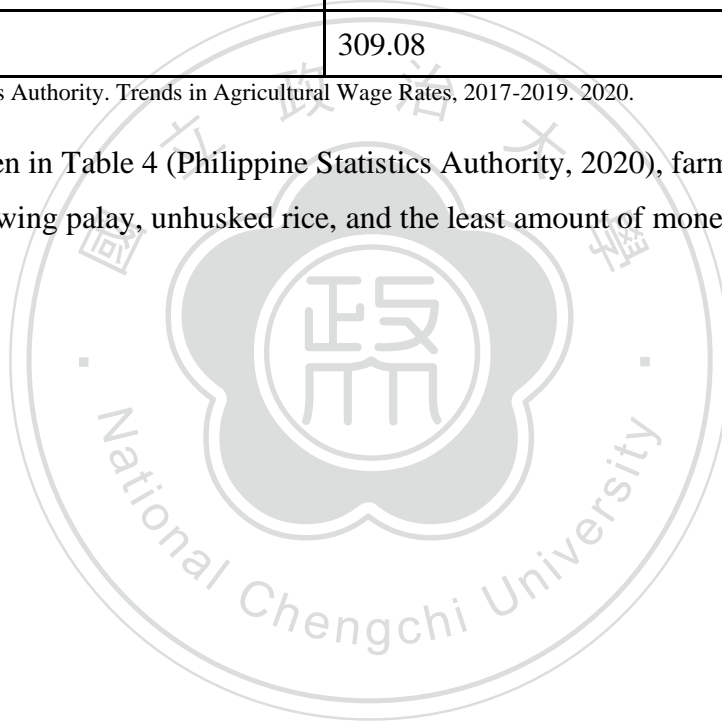
region (Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019). The region with the highest amount of gendered wage inequality is the Mimaropa Region, with men earning 82.41 more pesos than women, while the Caraga region has the lowest gendered wage difference, with men earning 1.65 more pesos than women.

Table 4: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Crop Type ³

Crop Type	Wage (pesos)
Palay	351.39
Corn	288.04
Coconut	338.72
Sugarcane	309.08

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority. Trends in Agricultural Wage Rates, 2017-2019. 2020.

As can be seen in Table 4 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020), farmers earn the most amount of pesos growing palay, unhusked rice, and the least amount of money growing corn.



³ See Appendix Table 4 for corresponding figure

Table 5: Palay: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region

Region	Men (pesos)	Women (pesos)	Difference (pesos)
Philippines	355.67	328.84	26.83
CAR	317.54	297.57	19.97
Ilocos Region	368.53	348.62	19.91
Cagayan Valley	384.42	367.60	16.82
Central Luzon	353.45	352.80	0.65
Calabarzon	423.69	410.20	13.49
Mimaropa Region	422.93	307.46	115.47
Bicol Region	328.95	305.15	23.8
Western Visayas	310.94	300.74	10.2
Central Visayas	309.09	254.45	54.64
Eastern Visayas	317.01	310.39	6.62
Zamboanga Peninsula	334.05	300.41	33.64
Northern Mindanao	345.07	328.06	17.01
Davao Region	371.19	340.70	30.49
SOCCKSARGEN	370.24	321.00	49.24
Caraga	356.25	356.70	-0.45
Barmm	270.46	301.78	-31.32

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority. Trends in Agricultural Wage Rates, 2017-2019. 2020.

Table 5 shows that in palay farming, men on average earn 26.83 pesos more than women, with the Mimaropa Region having the largest difference in pay between men and women, 115.47 pesos. Only in two regions, Carga and Barmm, do women earn more than men. In Caraga, women can earn .45 pesos more than men growing palay, while in Barmm they can earn 31.32 pesos more than men. This positive wage difference for women could be because the women in these regions are more involved in growing and selling palay than men. From 1999 to 2003, about 35% to 49% of palay farming households hired women (FAO, Fact Sheet Philippines).

Table 6: Corn: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region⁴

Region	Men (pesos)	Women (pesos)	Difference (pesos)
Philippines	294.32	266.81	27.51
CAR	294.84	256.10	38.74
Ilocos Region	317.44	299.44	18
Cagayan Valley	317.68	300.22	17.46
Central Luzon	350.94	305.65	45.29
Calabarzon	391.97	384.55	7.42
Mimaropa Region	305.15	274.23	30.92
Bicol Region	301.38	260.21	41.17
Western Visayas	280.14	263.60	16.54
Central Visayas	271.37	242.16	29.21
Eastern Visayas	282.61	274.85	7.76
Zamboanga Peninsula	254.46	239.13	15.33
Northern Mindanao	252.76	252.37	0.39
Davao Region	296.38	293.82	2.56
SOCCSKSARGEN	260.18	240.87	19.31
Caraga	307.20	306.53	0.67
Barmm	243.86	248.95	-5.09

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority. Trends in Agricultural Wage Rates, 2017-2019. 2020.

As can be seen in Table 6, men earn on average 27.51 more pesos than women growing corn. Central Luzon has the largest wage gap with men earning 45.29 pesos more than women growing corn. Only in Barmm can women earn 5.09 more pesos than men. This is most likely due to women being more involved in corn production in this region (Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019). Caraga and Northern Mindanao have the lowest wage gap, with men earning .67 and .39 pesos more than women respectively.

⁴ See Appendix Table 6 for corresponding figure

Table 7: Coconut: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region⁵

Region	Men (pesos)	Women (pesos)	Difference (pesos)
Philippines	339.33	297.25	42.08
CAR	–	–	
Ilocos Region	345.88	0	345.88
Cagayan Valley	443.33	0	443.33
Central Luzon	357.79	333.33	24.46
Calabarzon	391.18	388.24	2.94
Mimaropa Region	416.62	412.20	4.42
Bicol Region	355.21	337.79	17.42
Western Visayas	329.44	368.51	-39.07
Central Visayas	290.15	289.47	0.68
Eastern Visayas	307.78	306.43	1.35
Zamboanga Peninsula	280.99	263.05	17.94
Northern Mindanao	293.93	292.20	1.73
Davao Region	336.30	420.56	-84.26
SOCCKSARGEN	280.83	286.95	-6.12
Caraga	374.73	369.91	4.82
Barmm	349.00	0	349

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority. Trends in Agricultural Wage Rates, 2017-2019. 2020.

Table 7 shows that there is no data for the nominal wage rates for growing coconut in the CAR region, and in Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, and Barmm, women do not earn a wage growing coconut. In the Davao Region, SOCCSKSARGEN Region, and Western Visayas, women have a higher nominal wage rate than men. In Western Visayas, women earned men most likely due to the increased number of private households hiring women in this region (Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019). For the Davao and SOCCSKSARGEN Regions, information could

⁵ See Appendix Table 7 for corresponding figure

not be found as to why women earn more than men. Excluding the regions where women either do not grow coconuts or do not earn a wage, the region with the largest wage gap between men and women is Central Luzon with men earning 24.46 more pesos than women.

Table 8: Sugarcane: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region⁶

Region	Men (pesos)	Women (pesos)	Difference (pesos)
Philippines	311.13	292.98	18.15
CAR	–	–	
Ilocos Region	353.25	0	353.25
Cagayan Valley	322.18	308.56	13.62
Central Luzon	331.34	322.58	8.76
Calabarzon	341.08	328.19	12.89
Mimaropa Region	–	–	
Bicol Region	295.85	267.68	28.17
Western Visayas	301.21	317.53	-16.32
Central Visayas	282.15	262.97	19.18
Eastern Visayas	294.56	277.36	17.2
Zamboanga Peninsula	–	–	
Northern Mindanao	294.25	286.16	8.09
Davao Region	383.88	205.66	178.22
SOCCSKSARGEN	279.52	270.97	8.55
Caraga	–	–	
Barmm	–	–	

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority. Trends in Agricultural Wage Rates, 2017-2019. 2020.

As can be seen in Table 8, there is no data for the CAR, Mimaropa, Zamboanga Peninsula, Caraga, and Barmm Regions. In the Ilocos Region, women do not earn a wage

⁶ See Appendix Table 8 for corresponding figure

growing sugarcane. Only in Western Visayas can women earn 16.32 more pesos than men. The region with the highest wage gap between men and women growing sugarcane, excluding where the value for women is 0, is the Davao Region, where men earn 178.22 more pesos than women.

For all crop types and in most of the Philippine Regions, women were payed less than men. These findings are essential to understanding the background of this thesis because it shows how systemic gender inequality is in agriculture in the Philippines, and addressing gender inequality is one of the proclaimed goals of USAID (United Nations Foundation).

Research Purpose and Question

This thesis aims to analyze what the impacts are from USAID development projects on Philippine women living/ working in agriculture and if the development aid empowers these women or perpetuates patriarchal narratives using a postcolonial feminist framework. This endeavor aims to critically examine prevailing patriarchal ideas and development institutions to highlight the voices of Philippine women who have been impacted by these projects and show that for development to be considered sustainable, issues of social, political, and economic gender inequality must be prioritized and thoroughly addressed. Feminist theory was crucial in deciding this topic because women's experiences and aspects of their lives are oftentimes overlooked by social science research projects (Tickner, 2005: 15). Women are often left behind and harmed by foreign aid projects, and foreign aid projects tend to replicate the unbalanced relationship between developed and developing nations, influencing the impact aid has on the targeted population, thus feminist frameworks and postcolonial theories cannot be separated when studying development aid. It is not only important to analyze how aid affects gendered relationships in the targeted area and sector, but also to understand the colonial legacies the US left behind in the Philippines.

Because "Development theory and practice have not yet seriously engaged with the arguments of many feminist and postcolonial scholars" (Kothari, 2002), this thesis uses a postcolonial feminist framework to hopefully make a meaningful contribution to development practice that brings to light the interconnected relationship between imperialism, race and gender. A postcolonial feminist framework allows this thesis to:

1. Analyze how development projects change or perpetuate underlying harmful economic structures;

2. Highlight the connection between issues of imperialism in development and how it shapes gender inequalities; and
3. Examine how institutions reflect and, in turn, perpetuate harmful paradigms.

Kothari explains that “orthodox development knowledge and practice had been shaped by a Western and masculinist bias [which were] identified by postcolonial and feminist scholars as a process that claimed universality but instead derived particular interests and understanding” (Kothari, 2002: 35). Authoritative discourses of development assume the power to label groups of people based on their identity, reproducing inequalities (Ibid.: 38). Since development work is primarily concerned with the economy, women and their roles are rendered invisible while men’s interests and needs are made to represent society as a whole. Supposedly ‘gender neutral’ terms have hidden this male bias in development programs. Analysing gendered relations of power are thus “important in reshaping development approaches and exposing the ways in which theories, concepts and methodologies within development are masculinist” and are further essential in challenging the “process by which development knowledge was produced and gained legitimacy” (Ibid.: 35).

Existing critical development theories have argued that development aid relies on and, in turn, perpetuates an unbalanced hierarchical relationship between aid donor and aid recipient. This unbalanced relationship is due to the accumulation of capital in aid donors at the expense of the aid recipient. Capitalism prioritizes surplus profit, which, to be realised, means that aid donors need access to foreign markets to not only sell their surplus goods but also to take advantage of cheap raw resources and labour. Projects that focus on income generation give women a double burden, making women not only participate in paid labor but also in unpaid labor at home due to gendered divisions of responsibilities (Kothari, 2002). A USAID funded project, “The Fade-Away Effect: Findings from a Gender Assessment of Health Policies and Programs in the Philippines,” found that in Naga city, women and men both usually work 10 hours a day paid labor, but women work an additional 7 hour of unpaid labor back home (USAID, 2014). Researchers and aid practitioners view participation in income generating projects or control of household finances as an indicator of women’s empowerment, (USAID, 2014), however, these views have been “based on the assumption that women, as the most oppressed and exploited individuals, have been leading marginalised lives because they have

mainly engaged in non-income generating activities, specifically unpaid domestic duties” (Meena, 1984: 8).

Previous studies that used a postcolonial feminist perspective to investigate how development aid impacts women, such as in Kyrgyzstan (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010) and in the Philippines (Milgram, 2005), criticized liberal economic development schemes such as microfinancing and income-generating projects for their negative impacts on local industries and agricultural production and how these impacts, in turn, affect women. Such studies analyze the dimensions of power that development agencies reflect and perpetuate through their interactions with the people they intend to assist. These studies focus on challenging the dominant globalist neoliberal ideology (Kwiatkowski, 2005), and though the researchers do not specifically state the theoretical framework for their studies, this challenge resonates heavily with postcolonial feminism. In these studies, the researchers collected data by interviewing women participating in development aid projects.

There is a current lack of postcolonial feminist theorization and application to real life aid practices, so this research endeavors to address this gap and offer a case study that utilizes a postcolonial framework that recognizes the change in the relationship between the US and the Philippines from the US colonization period to current foreign aid relations between the two states. This postcolonial feminist framework will be further concentrated on feminist concerns of whether US development aid empowers or further adds to Philippine women’s marginalization.

Using a qualitative case study of US aid to the Philippines, this thesis will draw on postcolonial feminist theory to critically examine gender and development in foreign aid, specifically analysing how addressing issues of gender inequality can help make development projects more sustainable and inclusive. This thesis implements a qualitative research method that relies on the interviews of a development project worker and two women participants, as well as secondary sources such as USAID project evaluation documents. Qualitative studies rely on data collected from methods such as interviews, instead of statistics and numerical data, to draw conclusions about certain phenomena. Interviews are a personal form of data collection and can offer deep insight into how people think of and deal with certain situations, while secondary sources can also offer insight that helps support the interviewee responses. Such methods are essential in postcolonial feminist studies because the goal of postcolonial feminism is to highlight and center the voices of marginalized women, and other methods.

The purpose of the interviews is to see if and how women's lives are impacted from USAID programs. The secondary literature, USAID project evaluation documents, will also offer support for the interviewee's responses. The interview responses are especially important because they provide a deeper and more personal understanding of the impacts of USAID projects on the lives of women. Analyzing the interview responses along with examining the secondary literature, this thesis can draw some conclusions on the ability of USAID projects to empower women.

The research question my thesis intends to answer using a postcolonial feminist analysis of US aid to the Philippines is: What are the impacts of US agricultural development aid on Philippine women and do these aid processes empower or disempower them?

Chapter Organization

The following chapters will be organized as follows: Chapter 2, "Literature Review," will give an overview of existing literature on development, colonialism, postcolonial feminism, and aid projects in the Philippines. Chapter 3, "Research Method," will provide an in-depth discussion of my targeted interviewee audience, how I chose/found them, how I formulated my questions, the interviewee responses, and other relevant secondary sources; Chapter 4 will critically examine if USAID agricultural projects reinforce paradigms that harm women. Chapter 5 will conclude my thesis investigation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the existing literature in international relations and development studies that are related to foreign aid and gender and development. It is divided into the following sections: “A Critical Discussion of Foreign Aid,” “US Colonialism in the Philippines,” “Women and Development,” and lastly, “Development Aid and Women’s Empowerment and Liberation.”

A Critical Discussion of Foreign Aid

Before I analyze what foreign aid does, it is essential that we understand what foreign aid is. In “Reconceptualizing Foreign Aid,” Tomohisa Hattori warns that asking typical questions such as “Does it encourage exports, economic growth, peace... poverty and inequality, democracy, or a strong state?” tends to “reduce the understanding of foreign aid to the instrumental concerns of the donors, discouraging a more systematic theorization of the phenomenon as a whole” (Hattori, 2001: 634). Instead, we need to determine “how is foreign aid possible?” and “what are its properties?” (Ibid.: 634). To examine these questions, Hattori uses the concept of critical naturalism, which states human society is made from layers of relations that are ontologically deep. Retroduction, which uses “processes of abstraction and geo-historical specification,” should be used to cipher through these social relation layers (Hattori, 2001: 634). This approach allows Hattori to diverge from the core three theories of international relations (Realism, Liberalism, Marxism) by recognizing that states can have agency that is socially constituted and based on its social relations with other states. Hattori argues that the state is “ontologically ‘real,’” meaning that “it is neither the sum total of individual actions nor the product of some deeper structural logic, and, as such, cannot be reduced to the instrumental assumptions of security or profit maximization” (Ibid.: 635).

Using critical naturalism, Hattori starts his investigation by using Marshall Sahlins’s three types of resource allocation: economic exchange, redistribution, and giving (Sahlins 1972: 185-230) to distinguish between the different forms foreign aid can take. Economic exchange is when two parties voluntarily and simultaneously exchange goods or services through a market or market-like institution, such as mechanisms of price and barter, which enforces equality between the two party’s exchange. In a capitalist society, these institutions are “complex social constructions of rules” like property law, “and enforcement powers exercised by the executive

and judiciary branches of government...” (Hattori, 2001: 635). Redistribution “is the allocation of resources through a central authority, usually according to predetermined standards defined by customary obligation or politically achieved rights” (Ibid.: 636). Redistribution is involuntary and hierarchical, and the allocation of resources is very institutionalised; “it results from earlier *appropriation* or *consolidation* of resources,” for example taxes (Ibid.: 637). Giving is defined as a voluntary economic exchange where there is no certainty of return or political entitlement; you give without expecting to receive something in return. Foreign aid is usually considered a form of giving of the donor state to the partner state. Other sources of resource movement, such as military sales on credit or concessional loans, are not considered to be foreign aid because since they involve obligations that need to be re-paid, they are understood as being forms of economic exchange (Ibid.: 637).

Foreign aid as giving can be further disseminated into three different types and varying degrees of reciprocity. Balanced reciprocity reflects and affirms power symmetries, marking the parties involved as societal equals. Generalized reciprocity occurs when there is an imbalance of material resource distribution such as in a society that creates social cohesion through primordial rank-ordering; the recipient of the gift eventually becomes the giver (the parents give to their children because their children don’t have resources, and the child eventually becomes a parent/giver). Negative reciprocity is when there is a large socio-economic gap between the ‘strong’ and the ‘weak,’ so the recipients of the gifts will most likely never become givers (Ibid.: 638). Negative reciprocity highlights the material inequality between the donor and recipient, and signals foreign aid as a method of symbolic domination.

Hattori cites Pierre Bourdieu’s interpretation of symbolic domination as a practice that “mark[s] or signal[s] a social hierarchy” (Ibid.: 638). The ‘strong’ party in negative reciprocity has “The ability to suppress or indefinitely suspend the norm of reciprocity...[which] introduces a new dynamic into the relationship between donor and recipient, one that gradually *affirms* the social hierarchy over time” (Ibid.: 638). When the aid donor extends the ‘gift’ of aid, they “transform [their] status in the relationship from the dominant to the *generous*. In accepting such a gift (i.e. one that cannot be reciprocated), a recipient acquiesces in the social order that produced in: in other words, [they] become *grateful*” (Ibid.: 640). Hattori uses the correlation of the increase in bilateral grants with “a major *intensification* of this social hierarchy in the late 1970s with the onset of the Debt Crisis” as evidence that there is an “emerging division of labour

between multilateral and bilateral ‘donors’: the one imposing discipline, the other bearing gifts” (Ibid.: 649). Symbolic domination not only exists within the global institutionalized social hierarchy of developed and developing states, but also “in social relations of gender and race, where they take the form of gestures” (Ibid.: 640)

Marcus D. Watson mirrors this definition of symbolic domination in his analysis of foreign aid worker’s body gestures and their reflection of the overarching neocolonial imbalance of power between aid donors and recipients. Development projects followed colonial projects and the two shared “strikingly similar power relations, and arguably personnel relations” (Watson, 2013: 5). He writes that “a hierarchy is assumed to structure their [the foreign aid workers and the aid partners] relationship” (Ibid.: 8). Watson continues to explain how development aid workers viewed themselves as separate, not physically but ontologically, from the villagers they were helping (Ibid.: 8).

Aid workers “experienced themselves as hierarchically above their hosts,” viscerally feeling and performing their symbolic dominance (Ibid.: 7). Not only did they experience themselves as above their hosts, but also as “profoundly separate” from the villagers. These feelings and experiences are then translated into bodily gestures (Ibid.: 4). This does not mean that they physically isolated themselves from their hosts, but that they interacted with villagers only after they distinguished themselves as different than the villagers. Their gestures, such as facial signs of disgust or hesitancy to touch food a villager gave to them, reflect learned behaviours and biases from neocolonial narratives that strive to separate the developed from the undeveloped; the civilized from the supposedly uncivilized. The neocolonialist need for creating “a radical divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’” is thus ingrained into the body of western foreign aid workers, prescribing the neocolonial body not as a ‘thing’ but as a process (Ibid.: 11).

However, the colonial body not only wants to highlight their differences with the foreign aid partner, but also to supposedly *empower* and enlighten the aid recipients. Watson states that when a group considers it essential for another group to be empowered, the first group makes this decision based on the assumption that the targeted group does not have any power, and that they can only receive power through the first group, who alone holds the ‘secret’ to being empowered (Ibid.: 7).

Sheila Nair concurs with this sentiment and argues that “efforts to ‘empower’ people through aid flows necessitate the reproduction of an asymmetry of power- specifically

representational power- between donor and recipient” (Nair, 2013: 630). This ‘empowering’ narrative places NGOs and other aid agencies as the advocate of the poor, both supporting and disrupting the hegemonic power imbalance by usurping the voice of oppressed groups and supposedly acting in their best interests. The disruption of hegemonic power occurs when the development agency uses this ‘voice’ to support projects that act against corrupt and exploitative governments. Even though this disruption occurs, the aid agency is still assuming that they have the power to speak on behalf of other groups, rendering themselves as “authentic representatives of the marginalized” instead of simply uplifting marginalized voices (Ibid.: 646).

Western international aid organizations and government aid sectors’ construction of themselves as the saviour of poor people in developing countries perpetuates “a power-knowledge nexus [that rests] on a hierarchical ordering of donor and recipient; an ordering whose origins may be traced to colonial and imperial regimes, as well as to newer modalities of power that structure consent and/or resistance” (Ibid.: 631). Development aid and its goals such as poverty eradication and empowerment conceal power asymmetries, delineating the donor as the subject and the partner as an object.

Different fields of scholarship have varying interpretations of what foreign aid does and why the material inequality between donor and partner exists. Political realists see foreign aid as a “policy tool that originated in the Cold War to influence the political judgements of recipient countries in a bi-polar struggle” (Hattori, 2001: 634). They believe the donor’s and partner’s materially unequal relationship originates from “a larger political hierarchy determined by the bipolar distribution of strategic capabilities during the cold war” (Ibid.: 639). Liberal internationalists see foreign aid as a way to promote the economic, social, and political development of partner countries. They believe that the unequal material distribution is because of gaps between advanced and less advanced conditions for economic development, which international trade will amend given time.

World System scholars see aid as “a means of constraining the development path of recipient countries, promoting the unequal accumulation of capital in the world” (Ibid.: 634). Unequal relationships thus result from the expansion of world capitalism which constrains the aid partner’s development capabilities. Realists and World System theorists both tend to be pessimistic about foreign aid motives and effectiveness. However, aid pessimists are not a monolithic group: some criticize and question the donor country’s motives behind foreign aid

projects while others focus on faults with the partner country's form of government or level of political and economic stability. I will first address scholars who view donor's aid strategies as new imperialism.

New imperialism can be separated into economic and geopolitical themes. The first theory of economic new imperialism centers the role global capital plays in creating 'empires' (Kettel and Sutton, 2013) In this global system, a single state no longer dominates, and global power now lies with the world market, an entity that's power is beyond any single government. Another category under this theoretical view emphasises the role a transnational capital class plays in leading international transactions. This international elite is based on the United States and other developed countries "rather than the abstract power of global capital, and that it is by members of this elite, and in whose interests, that the world economy is duly governed" (Ibid.: 247).

A second economic theoretical category believes that there is an "international over-accumulation of capital resulting from the growing intensity of globalization" which derives from a "deep-seated structural crisis within world capitalism" (Kettel and Sutton, 2013: 247). The 'war on terror' and increasing military presence of the United States on the global stage is seen as a way for the US to reassert its international power and elitism. Military efforts in various countries opens new markets for surplus American capital and goods and is a "way of expanding the world market into previously restricted territories" (Ibid.: 247).

Meanwhile, the third approach denies the idea that a transnational elite and global capitalist system shape state behavior. Instead, modern imperialism in the international state system allows states such as the US to control global markets and "reshape foreign societies along lines beneficial to American national interests" (Ibid.: 248). Supporters of this approach point to the US's declining economic dominance to explain why the US is now reasserting their global dominance through military means instead of economic ones. The economic new imperialism theme generally focuses on state influence (or lack there-of) on global markets and how hegemonic states such as the US can implement non-economic strategies (such as military strength) to reassert their global dominance.

The geopolitical approach pivots on the use of humanitarian justifications to maintain order. Unlike old imperialism, which was direct rule based on the supposed inferiority of racial/ethnic groups, this form of imperialism is empire-like but without direct administration

(Kettel and Sutton, 2013: 249). The main drive for imperialistic interference in states is to 'address' their humanitarian crisis. In this scenario, the US is seen as a provider of goods and security, building stable democratic institutions where before none existed. However, the anti-imperialist façade that the US should be considered a rhetorical mask to conceal imperialistic aims and practices, such as securing global oil supplies (Ibid.: 250). Kettle and Sutton caution us that we need to be careful between these two lines of the geopolitical approach: imperialistic interference in state sovereignty is necessary to help solve humanitarian issues, and that this interference actually masks rent-seeking behaviour, because these accounts make it "too easy to slide into the crude notion that imperialist expansion is simply a product of power groups of individuals who have hijacked a nation's foreign policy to serve their own narrow ends" (Ibid.: 251). To avoid sliding into this 'crude notion' and to offer an extensive analysis of foreign aid, I will merge both geopolitical and economic approaches.

As I have discussed in the first part of this thesis, foreign aid is an unequal relationship which derives its social hierarchy through colonial power-knowledge formations. Neoliberal globalization and the spread of capitalism has caused the systemic transfer of valuable goods from developing countries to developed countries. In capitalism, a commodity's value comes from the cost of production plus profit. Because capitalism is focused on maximizing profits, there must be a surplus value behind profit. Surplus value then "becomes super profits that are either retained by a group of capitals that enjoy more favoured access to cheap labour or spread to raise the general rate of profit" (Higginbottom, 2018: 52). This is a form of super exploitation, Andy Higginbottom (2018) explains, because surplus value can be increased if the cost of labor decreases, increasing the need for unpaid labour. Capitalism thus finds excess surplus value at the worker's expense (Ibid.: 52).

Capitalism and imperialism are self-reinforcing and self-replicating: capitalism helps an elite class accumulate capital while exploiting surplus value from laborers. Goods tend to be overproduced in comparison to local demand, and to sustain this mode of production, new markets must be found to realize the benefits of surplus value. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a presentation for the case for the first Act for International Development to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stated that economic development is essential for opening up new sources of raw materials and goods, new markets for US exports, and other material benefits (Richards, 1997: 49). Globalisation through imperialism, Richards argues, is essential for

expanding the world market so that your country has access to more markets, raw materials, and cheap labor (Ibid.: 53-4). Capitalism relies on imperialism and imperialism relies on capitalism for continued survival and expansion.

Imperialism relies not only on capitalism but also on the continued dependency of aid partners to their aid donors. Richards uses the term ‘dependency’ to refer to situations when the economies’ of aid recipient countries is conditioned by the aid donor’s expansion of their economy into the aid recipient (Richards, 1977: 59). Aid partners rely on donors for technological improvements, resources, capital, etc. The aid donor chooses the route of development for the aid partner, usually through trade with the donor country, taking away the aid partner’s agency and control over their own development process. Emphasizing the partner countries’ export sector causes limited internal markets, preventing the growth of a middle class and impeding economic development (Watson, 2013).

Besides being import intensive if industrial development facilities are domestically owned, foreign ownership and investment can further drain foreign exchange reserves, limit the job opportunities for domestic workers, and increases the partner countries’ dependence on “on various forms of the ‘technological monopoly’ enjoyed by foreign firms, leading again to decapitalization through profit remittances and such” (Ibid.: 59). Richards delineates the role of aid in dependence-imperialism as: infrastructure development using funds from the donor, using aid to stimulate private investment for economic stimulus from the donor country, and structuring aid in such a way that it creates export opportunities for the donor (Ibid.: 59). Through these methods, dependence-imperialism creates and maintains economic and political ties between sources of capital and donor countries, reinforcing the global capitalist system and the inferior positions of developing countries.

Another critique of foreign aid as modern imperialism focuses on geopolitical ramifications of aid. Foreign aid and development strategies are depoliticised and essentialised to ‘doing the right thing’ or ‘helping the poor and suffering,’ disempowering the poor while serving the interests of donor countries. Under the Bush Jr. administration, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), a separate entity from USAID, made aid conditional on just governance, direct investments in people, and economic liberty (Nair, 2013: 635). The MCA falls under the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), “which promotes itself as ‘smart US Governance assistance in action, benefiting both developing countries and US taxpayers through...

competitive selection’, ‘country-led solutions,’ ‘and country-led implementation’” (Ibid.: 635). Even though at first glance these seem like good methods, Nair points out that “such technical language hews closely to American civilisation tropes of exceptionalism and exemplariness, even as its coerciveness is hidden from view” (Ibid.: 635).

Rhetoric strongly reflects how aid donors see themselves in comparison to aid partners. For example, the USAID programme in Indonesia, functions under “the belief that the Indonesian government will be ‘reform minded and value technical assistance... remains committed to improved service delivery through better management... continues to welcome support to non-governmental partners” (Ibid.: 642). Aid recipients are expected to follow donor protocol and enforce measures that correspond to donor expectation. Following donor guidelines for what constitutes ‘reform minded’ and ‘good governance’ (a term that many NGOs and aid programmes use as a benchmark), is “evidence of their [aid donor] superior ability to deliver the goods compared to the poor track record of [aid recipient] national governments” (Ibid.: 645). Richards emphasizes that other rhetoric such as ‘mutual monitoring’ of both partner and donor “‘somehow lacks credibility.’ No sense of equality or partnership has yet existed, nor is it likely” (Ibid.: 647). When donor country rhetoric is closely examined, it reveals many inconsistencies and hypocrisies between supposed aid goals and underlying strategy-seeking behaviour.

Foreign aid optimists focus on the need for capital and resources in partner countries. Although foreign aid is not the main fuel for development, it is a useful tool, along with good governance and stable economic policies, for improving the lives of aid recipients (Sachs, 2014). Nasim Shah Shirazi, Turkhan Ali Abdul Mannap and Muhammad Ali (2009) focus on Pakistan’s reliance on aid because it is capitally scarce and needs such aid to finance investment and trade gaps, support development programmes, develop infrastructure, promote economic growth, and build institutions. They examine aid efficacy in three stages that considers health, fertility, education, and poverty indexes. According to them, the first stage “maintains that aid increases savings directly and not through consumption or investment, which serves as an increment to the capital stock, and, in effect, stimulates growth”. The second stage “however, asserts that investment is the major ‘direct’ determinant of growth and aid and investment make a positive contribution to growth,” while the third stage, “finds direct impact of foreign aid on growth”. Shirazi, Mannap, and Ali further cite other studies which overall find positive correlations with

foreign aid and development outcomes which focus on the above indexes of health, fertility, education, and poverty (Shirazi, Mannap, and Ali, 2009: 854, 857-60).

The article most related to this thesis is “Gesture Politics or Real Commitment? Gender Inequality and the Allocation of Aid,” written by Axel Dreher, Kai Gehring, Stephan Klasen (2015), which focuses on aid efficacy in improving issues of gender inequality. They argue that because gender inequality is a key indicator to well-being and is an important development sector, many donors have said that they allocate aid that should reduce gender inequality, to sectors where it is most severe, and to countries where it is a particular concern. Dreher, Gehring, and Klasen question “whether donors indeed allocate aid in a way that is consistent with these states intentions” (Dreher, Gehring, and Klasen, 2015: 464).

To answer this question, they first distinguish between different kinds of gender inequality: inequality in economic and social rights (ability to own assets, own and inherit land, rights within familial hierarchy, right to travel without male consent, gain custody of child in divorce, inequality in marriage and divorce proceedings, survival, education, and empowerment/representation), inequality in survival (sex selective abortions, “missing women,” neglect of female infants and children, female/male life expectancy ratio), gender gaps in educational opportunities (the primary school completion gap has reduced in recent years and girls now have higher primary completion in many developing countries), and women’s empowerment (political representation and representation in higher decision making positions). Dreher, Gehring, and Klasen look at official development aid given to education, family planning services (funding has gone down over 60% last two decades), prenatal and postnatal care, aid for supporting anti-corruption in civil society, public sector management, democratic development has more than quadrupled (1.8% to 9.8%).

They find “some evidence that donors increase aid to countries where need in terms of gaps and low female achievement in health and education indicators is larger” (Ibid.: 465). However, more aid is allocated to partner countries “with greater female representation in parliaments. These [aid] effects are more pronounced among donors with higher female representation or female development ministers” (Ibid.: 466). Furthermore, “[they] find little evidence that donors allocate aid based on merit in the sense of rewarding countries that achieve reductions in gender gaps or reduce female deprivations in health and education” (Ibid.: 475).

Given these results, it is challenging to make a definitive statement on whether donor countries truly increase aid in relation to countries that have large gaps in gender inequality.

Because the relationship between the foreign aid donor and recipient relies on a specific global hierarchy created through imperialist efforts to accumulate capital at the expense of other countries, it is essential to understand how US colonialism in the Philippines has shaped and influenced the relationship between USAID and the Philippines today.

US Colonialism in the Philippines

To further understand the reasons why postcolonial feminism is the most suitable theory for this thesis, an examination of US colonialism in the Philippines is in order. US policy's maltreatment, abuse, and violence towards the land's indigenous population set the stage for US policy and attitudes towards their colonization of the Philippines, including the torture, rape, and murder of native Filipinos (Williams 1980, Welch 1974). In 1898, the US bought the Philippines from Spain as part of an imperializing strategy to bring Asian markets closer to the US's capitalism and its commercial world (Lumba, 2015). However, the US had to distinguish themselves from the former colonial power to justify their control over Philippine government, economics, and social life. The US government did this "through a policy of benevolent assimilation. Through the discourse of benevolent assimilation, the US fashioned itself as reluctantly taking responsibility for territories to establish stable democracies" (Caronan, 2012: 338). The US framed themselves as "selflessly provid[ing] democratic institutions and training, with only the uplift of the colonized in mind" (Ibid.: 342). This 'benevolent' assimilation relied on the racial assumption that Filipinos were racially inferior to white Americans and propagated a narrative which "emphasized that Filipinos as a people did not yet understand democracy ... therefore they could not establish an independent nation alone and needed the help of the United States, an established democracy" (Ibid.: 342). Racist assumptions of Filipino people in turn shaped US colonial administrator's Philippine policies.

US colonial authorities employed Charles A. Conant, an adamant supporter of colonial empire, stabilization and growth of a global capitalist system, to reform Philippine currency to make it amenable to US gold currency. Because the Philippines relied on a silver-centric currency system, the US military faced issues when buying supplies, paying Philippine native labor, and paying soldiers (Lumba, 2015: 606), due to the constant fluctuation between the

exchange rate of gold (US) to silver (PH). Besides logistical issues, “Chinese and Filipinos held authority over money and over American consumers through their ability to ‘discern’ ... knowledge of the local, day-to-day, retail market” (Ibid.: 606-9). Their monetary authority over US citizens in the Philippines was, of course, unacceptable to the US colonial regime and thus needed to be ‘reformed’ to the gold system. US colonial administrators turned their lack of knowledge of Philippine currency into blaming the natives for being ‘incapable’ of understanding the value of gold currency.

US colonial administrators blamed Filipino’s reluctance to adopt the gold standard inability to understand the value of smaller gold coins in comparison to larger silver ones because on their “primitive mental capacity” which did not allow them to understand value created by the capitalist market instead of value created by concrete aesthetics. The local’s perceived ineptitude of understanding capitalist markets was warped by Conant, who saw the “imperial instincts of the Anglo- American race... as analogous to the natural tendencies of capital to expand, and capitalist crisis as merely the growing pains of civilization advancement” (Lumba, 2015: 614). Reforming Philippine currency was therefore “a crucial test not only for the universality of the gold standard but also for the increasingly privileged role played by expert authority in state decisions” (Ibid.: 617).

US control over Philippine state policies, such as their currency system, was a necessity for establishing capitalism in the Philippines, where a racial hierarchy was used to separate Philippine natives from the white US citizens based on a supposed inferior mental capacity. This inferiority was then used not only as justification for economic imperialism, but also for building capitalist infrastructure in the Philippines, which relied on the exploitation of Filipinos to contribute to the US empire and to the global growth of capitalism (Ibid.: 615-6).

US colonization of the Philippines was not only seen as essential for the spread of ‘democratic values,’ but also for increasing capitalism’s global market power.

As pointed out in Kirsch’s critical comments, not only was Philippine economic policy used to further benefit the US military, but the Burnham development plans for Manila and Baguio likewise entrenched “US geopolitical and economic interests”. Kirsch argued landscape can be a “historical way of seeing, rather than as a received concept in cultural and historical geography... aesthetic landscapes have served at times to erase the conditions of their own production, or to naturalize a particular ‘order of things’” (Kirsch, 2017: p. 319). Different

aspects of landscape, such as the appearance of certain buildings, for example, schools constructed by the US, looked distinctly different than 'native' buildings, signalling that "this nation was being constructed from the top down, by a state that stood architecturally apart from its subjects". Efforts to entrench the US empire in the Philippines through landscape displays "how the ideological contradictions of the imperial moment- for the US, between democracy and empire, liberator and subjugator - were built into American colonial spaces, sometimes brutally, sometimes through aesthetic means in the formation of setting and landscape" (Ibid.: 318).

Other plans, such as the US's agriculture and forest policies in the Ifugao territory in Luzon, likewise were implemented to suit US interests, and their newly enforced "land laws ran counter to ancestral land claims in Ifugao" (Klock, 1995: 12). Growing crops for export and for US citizens living in Manilla "became the government's first priority", and the Bureau of Agriculture was established to increase food production and to diversify crops, mainly for US soldiers (Ibid.: 9-10). The Ifugao people had a history of ancestral forest and land management, however, new US policies, such as the 1902 Land Tenure Act, the 1905 Public Land Act, and the Mining Law of 1905, which "declared that Americans could purchase land under the guise of mining activities," suspended Ifugao traditional law and weakened their ability to protect their forests and land, leaving it susceptible to US exploitation (Ibid.: 10). And even though the Land Tenure Act of 1902 "was intended to protect small farmers from land grabbers. It did not shield the small farmers" (Ibid.: 4, 6, 15). "Throughout the next forty years, a Filipino elite would pass a cascade of land tenure laws in Congress to serve their own needs or take advantage of peasants at the local level" (Ibid.: 4, 6, 15). These US enforced land acts failed to protect farmers because they did not "take into account ancestral domain issues, expensive documentation fees, tribal suspicions and illiteracy, and the substitution of a paper document for verbal agreements" (Ibid.: 10).

Moving to the 20th century, the US maintained their power and influence in the Philippines through the Bell Act, which mandated a period of free trade between the US and the Philippines, fixed the value of peso to the dollar, and required Philippines to give equal treatment and rights to investors, "which, as a precondition for badly needed reconstruction assistance, required the Philippines to amend its constitution so as to give to Americans equal rights in the exploitation of Philippine National resources, and the 99-year lease given the United States for a number of military bases" (Landé, 2001, Merrill, 1993). The US's insistence on focusing on

military aid weakened pre-existing democratic components, and their other forms of economic aid likewise failed to solve the Philippines' most basic structural inadequacies as agricultural nation dependent on US aid (Merrill, 1993). Furthermore, the US pursued political relationships with questionable and undemocratic leaders, such as President Marcos, who implemented martial law after 1972, because he allowed them to maintain access to Clark Air Field and Subic Naval Base, which "took a central place in American Philippine policy" (Landé, 2001: 524).

Filipinos resented the US for their support of President Marcos and for the unequal provisions in the various treaties enacted by the US, and "few Filipinos now believe that any contributions of American colonialism to their country's development outweighed its costs", however, Landé states that there have been positive contributions from the US. Landé highlights "the institution of a system of free public education in both urban and rural localities that provided opportunities for the upward social mobility of the ambitious and linguistically talented children of the poor," the introduction to English, and the "always friendly and cooperative ties that have existed between [US]AID personnel and their Filipino partners" (Landé, 2001: 526-7), as evidence to the positive effects of US imperialism.

Nonetheless, other scholars disagree that the US implemented education system had entirely positive impacts and argue that the "moral imperative in teaching serves as a cover for economic, political, cultural, and religious hegemony" (Milligan, 2000: 110). Caronan argues that "in order for assimilation to appear benevolent, the United States needed to secure and maintain the consent of the native populations to be ruled. To attain this goal, systems of public education were established in the new island colonies to reproduce US history and ideology" (Caronan, 2012: 338). The moral imperative to 'help' Filipino people by educating them in a specifically US manner "implied the presence of a moral, cultural, or intellectual, as well as a material, deficiency among the people we hoped to help". Legitimizing US methods of education while invalidating local methods and histories "has served to create and maintain a neocolonial identity among Filipinos that benefits the United States" (Milligan, 2000: 110-4). Philippine independence in 1946 thus "represented the success of the US benevolent colonial mission," and Philippine dependency on the US (Caronan, 2012: 342). Education was yet another tool to ingrain US imperialism on "intimate, embodied relations of cultural authority, race, nation, class, and gender" (Kirsch, 2017: 321).

US colonialism in the Philippines relied on the racial narrative that Filipinos were racially inferior to white Americans and propagated a narrative which “emphasized that Filipinos as a people did not yet understand democracy ... therefore they could not establish an independent nation alone and needed the help of the United States, an established democracy” (Caronan, 2012: 342). US colonial policy, such as their land and agricultural policies, was situated to pursue their own interests without regard for preexisting traditions and norms (Klock, 1995). US led education reproduced US history and ideology (Caronan, 2012), and ingrained certain understandings of race, class and gender (Kirsch, 2017). This colonial legacy necessitates the need for a postcolonial feminist analysis of whether US foreign aid to the Philippines perpetuates harmful, patriarchal northern aid paradigms that further marginalize women.

Understanding the US’s colonial legacy in the Philippines is necessary for tracing a path from colonialism to imperialism and changes in mainstream foreign development thought, such as when women began to be considered in foreign development practice, to understand why certain groups were left out of development practices and discourses and why they continue to be pushed to the margins in current day development projects.

Women and Development

Feminist scholars began theorizing about women’s role in development projects in the 1970s. In 1973, the US congress passed the Percy Amendment in the Foreign Assistance Act as an attempt to integrate women into USAID development (Apodaca, 2000: 205). This amendment mandated that USAID policies should prioritize programs that involve women economically as a means to improve women’s economic status and add to development efforts (it should be noted that an evaluation of the Percy Amendment in 1993 found the “State Department’s implementation and monitoring... was grossly inadequate) (Ibid.: 205-6). Along with the Percy Amendment, USAID also created the Women in Development (WID) office. WID supporters sought to include women in existing foreign aid structures and paradigms, and development organizations such as the UN, World Bank, and Food and Agriculture Organizations (FOA) began to focus on including women in their development projects.

However, WID scholars and theories were criticized by Gender and Development Scholars (GAD), who were “a manifestation of both the rise of socialist feminism in the developed world and postcolonial feminism, which had emerged out of the dramatic growth of a

Third World Women's movement in the 1980s" (Baden and Goetz 1997; Jaquette and Staudt 2006). GAD theorists argued that WID's ideology was simply an "add women and stir" approach that targeted only women and focused solely on integrating women into the development process," which overlooked women's differences amongst themselves and also ignored the necessity of addressing and challenging the power imbalance between men and women (Ransom and Bain, 2011: 52). GAD scholars believe that women cannot be added into development structures because these structures encompass and perpetuate existing patriarchal, capitalist, and neoliberal values; the "very global economic system that... subordinates women in its efforts to accumulate capital" (Ibid.: 52).

Starting in 1985, GAD viewed gender mainstreaming as a primary path to promoting gender equality. Gender mainstreaming's purpose "was to have gender issues diffused throughout government and development bureaucracies, with gender integrated throughout all policies, programs, and practices" (Ibid.: 52-3). Even the UN adopted this ideology at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, and defined gender mainstreaming as a strategy aimed at incorporating women's and men's experiences and issues as central tasks for development agency infrastructure and projects as a means to tackle gender inequality (Ibid.: 53). Following the UN's lead, donor agencies began to recognize that sensitivity to gender issues was essential to "maximize the impact of development strategies, including agricultural strategies, on reducing poverty and improving food security" (Ibid.: 53).

Even though GAD and gender mainstreaming were evolutionarily more cognizant than WID of gendered struggles, it still fell short of achieving gender equality. Critics argue that the idea of gender mainstreaming has been misused and transformed from a radical theory to public management strategy. "Co-optation occurred because in order to facilitate its implementation and ensure its acceptance, the concept of gender had to be depoliticized and its radical content diluted," leaving little room to engage in useful and essential analysis of power relationships (Ibid.: 53). Co-option and deradicalization have had negative consequences on the people supposed to be helped by foreign aid such as Third World Women, whose reports "indicate that processes continue to be prioritized over results" (Ibid.: 54). These negative consequences have caused scholars to question whether foreign aid actually empowers women and leads to their social, political, and economic liberation.

‘Postcolonial feminism’ refers to two different yet connected frameworks, postcolonialism and feminism. The term ‘postcolonialism’ is used “as a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism, in which case the usage is somewhat more abstract and less concrete in reference” (Dirlik, 1994: 331). Postcolonial studies examine the origin of imperialism and its corresponding racism and its diffusion throughout history (Sylvester, 1999). Postcolonialism, reflecting influences from Postmodernism and Marxism, critiques Euro/Western centrism and “capitalism’s structuring of the modern world” (Dirlik, 1994: 346) as its central tasks. When studying postcolonialism, it is important to remember that the histories and memories of the colonizer and the colonized are intertwined and interconnected (Sylvester, 1999).

When feminism is added to the postcolonial equation, the focus shifts to subaltern, or Third World Women’s resistance movements and investigating questions such as “How [do] current struggles for liberation and justice link to past struggles, to anticapitalist, antiracist, and feminist struggles?” (Asher, 2017: 516). In the 1980s, Gayatri Spivak identified issues of not just revealing but highlighting Third World subaltern voices and “embrac[ing] issues of globalization that bring everyone into the conversation” (Sylvester, 1999: 714). This focus on inclusivity centers the importance of representation. Asher argues that there are two meanings of representation that are crucial to postcolonial commentary: the “first refers to representation as the constitution of or production of the subjects and objects of intervention, and the second refers to representation as speaking for or on behalf of marginalized or subaltern subjects” (Asher, 2017: 517). Representation, as Spivak notes, is dependent on problems of relations between dominant forms of power and those it subordinates, such as “the west and the rest”, western philosophy/ science and Indigenous knowledge, and how these relations are interpreted and carried out by the dominant (read: western) power (Ibid.: 517-8).

Like Spivak, Mohanty views the subaltern as being Third World women. Western feminism assumes that women are “an already constituted and coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location or contradictions, implies a notion of gender or sexual difference... which can be applied universally and cross-culturally” (Mohanty, 1984: 64). Mainstream, western feminism also “focus[es] their struggle exclusively on gender discrimination while eschewing other forms of struggle, notably ethnic struggles in gender-mixed settings” (Sa’ar, 2005: 686). Western feminism’s homogenization occurs on the

basis of racial, ethnic, religious, and class homogenization, which assumes that all women face the same kind[s] of oppression (Mohanty, 1984).

Because “there is no a prior Third World woman: such women are discursively produced by recent Western feminism in a manner reminiscent of colonial practices,” women are likewise assumed to be a coherent group “prior to their entry into ‘the development process’” (Mohanty, 1984: 68). Development policies thus do not impact groups of women in the same way, ignoring the intersections women’s identities can have with other ethnic, racial, religious, economic, abled-bodied/disabled, etc. that an unawareness of would negatively affect the effectiveness of such development policies (Mohanty, 1984, Sa’ar, 2005).

Not only can women have a multitude of identity intersections, but concepts of gender, ethnicity, and class are interconnected and mutually informing (Sa’ar, 2005). Liberalist understandings of these concepts have further marginalized women. Liberalism “constitutes a symbolic system that is intertwined with world historical processes of capitalism and globalization and with modernity,” where modernity “has perpetuated patriarchal arrangements, with liberalism providing some of the major and political tools for the realization of such outcomes” (Ibid.: 684). Liberalism is not only sexist, but is also ethnic and racist and naturalizes ethnic and gendered aspects, whitewashing violence against these groups (Ibid.: 685).

Referencing Mohanty (1999), Sa’ar also argues that capitalism likewise contributes to whitewashing violence towards these groups by “[creating] the consumer as *the* citizen. This citizen-consumer is made possible and legitimate through the cheap and often invisible labor of racialized, noncitizen, or lesser-citizen minorities” (Ibid.: 685). Economic globalization and imperial structures and narratives are interconnected to the gendering and racializing of labor. Even to this day, former US military reservations like Clark, are special economic zones and still possess the same autonomy it did during US colonization.

The goal of postcolonial feminisms’ challenging and questioning of mainstream foreign development paradigms and practices is to expose that the systems under which they operate and in turn perpetuate, such as capitalism, are in fact harmful and contradicts the purpose that foreign development clings to: to help people. Postcolonial feminism endeavours to empower women by giving them a voice and a platform to speak their truth against mainstream forms of power. Through deconstructing and revealing the harm caused by northern and liberal development

paradigms, postcolonial feminist scholars and practitioners open a space for marginalized women to fill.

Development Aid and Women's Empowerment and Liberation

In "Foreign Aid and the Question of Women's Liberation," Ruth E. Meena (1984) argues that foreign aid to women became a political necessity because of colonialism's legacy of subjugating women for capital accumulation. The introduction of "a cash crop economy, exploitation in the mining industry and the principle of 'divide-and-rule' by the colonial powers created conditions which made it possible for aid to be used by both state and international capital as a political instrument" (Meena, 1984: 2). Meena continues to illustrate how families had to participate in cash crop production instead of subsistence farming. This led to a trend of men familial members migrating to urban areas to search for waged employment since their previous wages were not adequate for to pay for his family's needs now they do not labor as much in areas necessary for their survival. Without men at home, women in the family had to take on excess burdens and responsibilities (Ibid.: 2). The centrality of cash crop production to colonization goals of accumulating capital led to the subordination and diminishing of women's roles, constructing women's responsibilities simply as reproducers and maintainers of the future labor force. Aid packages add to this construction of women responsibility by seeking to make women more productive members of the economy (Ibid.: 2).

Foreign aid directed at women rarely has to do with liberating them from existing patriarchal and capitalist paradigms. Different programs, such as educational and income generating projects, aim to give women 'usable' knowledge to make them "better tools of production" (Ibid.: 7). International capital deploys income generating projects as a means to enable "women to bear the cost of reproducing and maintaining the labour force without cost to capital," assuming that "women... have been leading marginalised lives because they have mainly engaged in non-income generating activities, specifically unpaid domestic duties" (Ibid.: 8). Therefore, foreign aid perpetuates the unbalanced global hierarchical status quo, maintaining inequality both nationally and internationally. Meena argues that foreign aid paradigms construct the real problems marginalized groups face by highlighting development actions that allow them to pursue their own interests, for example, "most income-generating projects... have almost invariably been imposed upon the masses as a deal between aid agencies/ governments and the

governments in the recipient countries” (Ibid.: 9). In most of these cases, the development agency identifies and dictates the needs of the aid recipients, reflecting the dominant powers needs and concerns while concealing the actual problems that the aid recipients face (Ibid.: 9). Foreign aid contradicts its supposed goal of ending gender inequality by perpetuating the very cycles of domination and oppression it seeks to alleviate, failing to liberate women from their political, social, and economic constraints.

Critical feminist theorists have also questioned foreign aid’s ability to empower women. Lynne Milgram (2005) explains three dimensions of power: “individual control over rights, resources, other people and one’s personal position” (Milgram, 2005: 345). These three dimensions reflect the primary concepts of “‘power to,’ ‘power over’ and ‘power within’” (Kabeer 1994: 223-228). The ideas of ‘power to,’ ‘power over,’ and ‘power within’ are hard to realize in foreign aid directed at women because these acts “ -whether collaborative or resistive- builds and contributes to, even as it reconstructs, the governing discourses and practices” (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010: 181).

Marie L. Campbell and Katherine Teghtsoonian (2010) likewise display this cyclical phenomenon by citing women’s grassroots empowerment work in Kyrgyzstan. While these women work to gender aid effectiveness, they are simultaneously “enacting ruling practices and discourses. Their struggles thus both form and are formed within the matrices of the development institution that they are, through their own efforts, bringing into being” (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010: 181-2). They point to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD 2005/2008) as a “ruling discourse” that defines the concept of ‘effectiveness’ for aid projects (Ibid.: 184-5). Dictating the meaning of ‘effectiveness’ and other “efforts to rationalize and evaluate development assistance are themselves the product of a huge knowledge industry, inseparable from governance efforts that some analysts see stretching from the colonial era” (Ibid.: 185). Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness principles of country ownership (“assigns responsibility for the identification and articulation of development priorities to the recipient country”) and alignment (“which implies that international donors will be guided in their decisions regarding how to direct the aid that they make available by decisions made within recipient countries as they are expressed through a written document, the country development strategy (CDS)”) (Ibid.: 186), have created challenges for gender aid advocates.

Because of these guidelines, women empowerment advocates must direct their energies not only at addressing issues of gender inequality but also towards “reforming the structure, activities, and priorities of the government within Kyrgyzstan so that these are more capable of acknowledging and responding to the needs and interests of women” (Ibid.: 187). Advocates must therefore learn how to navigate governmental bureaucratic processes and “speak the language” of Aid Effectiveness principles so that women’s interests can be intelligible to foreign aid institutions. Because advocates now have to spend time adjusting their goals to coordinate with institutional goals, “their grassroots work will be subordinated” (Ibid.: 192). Women’s empowerment projects need to align with country development goals to obtain a program budget, subordinating women’s interests to bureaucratic processes and arbitrary ideas of aid effectiveness and evaluation (Ibid.: 189).

The Paris Declaration and other documents dictating how to achieve aid effectiveness frame women’s empowerment efforts. Advocates must align women’s interests with that of the foreign aid project, and even must forgo more radical empowerment efforts to abide by development ruling discourses (Ibid.: 195). By participating with these organizations and their rules, “they come to accept ruling premises even when these are at odds with what they know about women’s interests and how best to express and meet them” (Ibid.: 189-190). Women thus become not just an object of ruling discourses but also its subject, perpetuating regulations that are not “of their own choosing or making (Ibid.: 196-8). Even though this can subvert women’s original empowerment efforts, Campbell and Teghtsoonian believe that “this sort of struggle is the only possible way to advance a women’s agenda” (Ibid.: 198).

Agricultural development aid has likewise failed to significantly empower women because these projects have not adequately integrated gendered issues into larger reforms (Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002: 679). Women make up a large proportion of agricultural laborers, in 2009 making up 60.5% of workers compared to 42.9% of men in Southeast Asia (Ransom and Bain, 2011: 55). However, “despite the diversity of women in agriculture, in practice women still tend to be viewed by development organizations as helpmates to men rather than autonomous economic actors” (Ibid.: 65). Elizabeth Ransom and Carmen Bain’s (2011) research has found that there was a decline in development aid during a time when women became more active in agriculture (Ibid.: 65), indicating that addressing women’s issues in agriculture was not a priority for development agencies.

Even though it is inappropriate to assume that projects which don't explicitly state that they aim to alleviate gender inequalities don't engage women in practice, "there is an exhaustive amount of development literature that suggests that most agricultural aid targets men and is either women-neutral, or worse, unintentionally harms women (Ibid.: 65). Development agencies' aid to women has also been "inconsistent and aid directed at empowering women remains precarious;" "Moreover, as the concept of gender became mainstreamed in the mid-1990s, the percentage of development projects focused on women and gender declined" (Ibid.: 66).

Agricultural development aid, and its corresponding phenomena such as trade liberalization of farm products further subordinated women to patriarchal economic modes of production (Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002: 679). Development strategies to grow exportable non-traditional crops, such as fruit and flowers, have disproportionately gone to women (Momsen 2004), signaling a 'feminization' of agriculture as men move to urban areas for work. However, this feminization of agricultural work "does not represent an equalization of opportunities, but rather a further marginalization of small-scale farms, since many female heads of household are younger and less educated than male heads of household, have less land, less capital, and less access to credit" (Ransom and Bain, 2011: 55). Even when job opportunities offer increased wages, they are usually "captured by men and partly because current patterns of women's employment fail to gain accommodation and women move from formal to informal, from wage worker to casual worker, depending on domestic and family compulsions" (Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002: 679).

Isolating economic conditions, such as lack of access to a lucrative income, from women's marginalization from "local social and political [matrices]" (Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002: 679), the gendered division of labour and gendered modes of production, ignores the interdependence between these two realms and the ways in which they together impact women's lives. The oppression that women face varies and is multifaceted, and thus women need to be provided various support systems, such as childcare and pre/post-partum services (Ibid.: 679), to address the multiple ways in which they experience inequality. However, it is important to remember that "... the exploited women, have not remained passive instruments of these manipulations. Some 'failure' of aid projects can directly be related to resistances by masses who are being manipulated" (Meena, 1984: 12). When addressing gender inequality, it is

important to remember that women are not mere objects being acted upon, but are subjects with agency, even if it is limited.

Other attempts to empower women through economic independence likewise fall short of their intended goals. In, “Myths of Microfinance as a Panacea for Poverty Eradication and Women Empowerment,” Samuel O. Onyuma and Alfred Ouma Shem define microfinance as the “provision of savings, credit and/or other financial and business products that are micro in size to poor clients, who are conventionally believed to lack the capacity to save and the ability to pay the high interest rates charged by commercial banks on credit” (Onyuma and Shem, 2005: 199). Most microfinance programs aimed at uplifting poor people are focused on women because they tend to have higher loan repayment rates. However, “despite strong claims about the effects of microcredit on borrowers and their businesses... there is relatively little rigorous evidence about these programs,” especially since women are not a static, monolithic group and the impact of microlending projects likewise greatly varies (Karlan and Zinman, 2011:1278, Onyuma and Shem, 2005: 201).

If microfinance were to empower women, Onyuma and Shem argue it should do so by providing independent income sources to reduce women’s economic dependency on their husbands and enhance their autonomy; educating women so that they become more aware of their rights and support services that they can access; and finally, by increasing women’s control of household finances and material resources so that their household standing increases and their husbands respect their decision (Onyuma and Shem, 2005: 207). However, microlending projects tend to mostly help people who are on the poverty line rather than the poorest of the poor, especially since the poorest of the poor tend to live in remote areas where it is hard to implement these programs. In these cases, some projects can even make their situation even worse. Because the poorest of the poor have less capital and access to assets to pay off debt, some microlenders charge them higher rates of interest to cover the cost of lending money to them. In 2003, the Foundation for Development Corporation “reported that microlenders in the Philippines charged up to 36% interest,” which is well above the inflation rate (Ibid.: 202). This high cost of microcredit “means that even higher returns to capital are required for microcredit to produce improvements in business income, and thus in household income and consumption” (Karlan and Zinman, 2011: 1278).

Dean Karlan and Jonathan Zinman (2011) likewise found in their research that microfinancing programs are not always beneficial. The Philippine First Macro Bank's micro-credit expansion (FMB), (a for profit lender in Manila that receives technical assistance from USAID), increased borrowing from financial institutions (with no effect on informal borrowing), but it did not "generate bigger businesses, higher income, and higher subjective well-being, but rather led to stronger risk-management (a benefit which is "on margins often deemed second-order by policy makers practitioners, and economists"), fewer businesses, and lower subjective well-being". We should thus "question the wisdom of assuming that impacts are stronger for pre-existing micro-entrepreneurs and women than for 'consumers,' men, or aspiring micro-entrepreneurs" (Karlan and Zinman, 2011: 128-3).

Microcredit's focus on empowering women through business investment falls short of its intended goals because "microcredit works through more complex and disparate mechanisms that start with the household rather than with the business" (Onyuma and Shem, 2005: 208). Furthermore, "poor women as smallholders cannot compete with cheap food imports and end up diverting the use of credit. Where the poor women borrow agricultural inputs, it is men who manage and dispose of agricultural products" (Ibid.: 212).

Consequently, women are often pressured to work outside of their household duties to help their families acquire the necessary assets to repay loans and can even end up more dependent on their husbands after joining credit programs than from before they joined. Microcredit's inability to empower women, and in many cases is detrimental to women's empowerment, is because these projects "[favour] export production that are typically male-dominated over subsistence production that is typically female-dominated... which is also structured to serve interests of multinationals, male chauvinists- entrenched leadership ... which mostly affect the poor in rural areas" (Onyuma and Shem, 2005: 200). Microfinancing does little to challenge the status quo that keeps women subordinated.

Different aid projects, whether it be agricultural or different microfinancing schemes, fail to adequately empower women because they do not address pre-existing gender inequalities in the community it is being implemented in, does not change or balance women's labor burden in the home and on the farm, and fails to lift the poorest people out of poverty. These trends likewise apply to Philippine women, who are likewise inadequately empowered by development projects.

Philippine Women and Foreign Aid

Gendered and racialized discourses continue to construct low-wage Filipina workers in the Philippines today and how Filipina women are crucial to projects of modernity on the previous US Clark airbase (Gonzalez, 2007: 97-9). Modernity projects rely on a trope of Filipinas as being “manageable, cheap, and available ‘service’ in state and private development discourses and as a material laboring presence” which “operates as a crucial bridge between the colonial project and the present day in the Philippines” (Ibid.: 101). The relations of labor and gender at the Clark golfhouse (formerly the Clark military base) “hold on to and further elaborate the gendered and racialized discourses of its former incarnation as a military institution,” troubling US efforts to ‘disappear’ “past and contemporary dominations” and the US violent occupation of the Philippines (Ibid.: 29). The “parallel between the role of the US in the Philippines as messiah and the “rescue narrative about Filipina labor,” giving poor women jobs they would otherwise not have, “is ultimately about relaying a pedagogical narrative about the exemplary subjects of benevolent colonialism” (Ibid.: 40). Because “[today] the international and domestic elites who come to invest in and play at Clark accept their due as saviors of the unemployed masses,” (Ibid.: 40) colonialist networks of labor, race, gender and desire are perpetuated.

The bulk of Filipino women are lower class, and their role revolves around home management and family life (Ibid.: 101). Most of these women are “self-employed in low income, low prestige, traditionally feminine types of work” (Ibid.: 101). Even though the majority of mothers and daughters (85% and 69% respectively) interviewed in Anna Miren B. Gonzalez’s study, “feel that their problems are due to external conditions and circumstances over which they have no control,” the majority in each group also feels a personal sense of duty to overcome these external conditions.

These external conditions, such as neoliberal capitalism, which is “supported by the Philippine government, and asserted by countries (like the U.S.) ... that have played a powerful and significant role in Philippine society historically,” has had harmful impacts on “political instability and economic vulnerability, and continuing social inequality” (Kwiatkowski, 2005: 306-7). Policies aimed at development such as trade liberalization and privatization of state enterprises have caused the destruction of local industries, damaged local agricultural production, reduced the amount of government financial support to social services, lead to an

outflow of migrants looking for work in foreign countries, and rising unemployment rates domestically (Ibid.: 307).

Since development strategies in the Philippines can have negative impacts on the very people they are attempting to ‘help,’ it is vital to assess the power dynamics that operate within development aid workers and the projects’ participants. Lynne Milgram (2005) argues that:

Particular understandings and applications of power, such as those that privilege the market or are rooted in gender and class hierarchies, are built into the rules and practices of social institutions... that this institutional climate can influence the results of the program from the outset. The implications of such a power bias can, in turn, hold unintended consequences for social change objectives as initiatives may be actively contested and resisted by participants who are excluded from the decision-making process (Milgram, 2005: 344).

Such social institutions and aid programs’ design, operations, and orientation, can leave “little space for the voices of differently positioned women to be heard, and thus little opportunity to incorporate women’s knowledge and experiences into more locally appropriate and potentially empowering livelihood enterprises” (Ibid.: 344), consequently “inhibit[ing] the achievement of the goals of poverty alleviation and empowerment for many women participants” (Kwiatkowski, 2005: 312). The relationship and power dynamic between NGO workers and project participants can likewise interfere with development goals; “the negotiations of power that occurred in the health NGO between NGO staff and female Ifugao health workers resulted in ambiguous impacts on both women participants’ and the community’s empowerment” (Ibid.: 313). Aid workers must be aware of the power unbalance and their own biases when working with aid partner project participants.

The Center for Women’s Enterprise Development (CWED) in Laguna Province, operates on a microfinance solidarity group structure. The women who had best been able to take advantage of loans are women who already have their own businesses, such as “traditional agricultural products (fruits, especially coconuts, market vegetables), operating grocery and dry goods stores, selling ornamental garden plants (a common local enterprise) and selling home-cooked food both in street vending and in permanent shops,” whereas “women who work solely in household-based cultivation and production or in non-paid domestic tasks are reluctant to borrow funds for investment” (Milgram, 2005: 357).

The solidary group dynamics in CWED's program illuminate the harsh sanctions that are often imposed on borrowers to ensure their high repayment rates. These "sanctions and repayment pressures can damage the cohesiveness of the group, undermine any empowerment of borrowers, lead to household debt-building and, in fact, aggravate the conditions of poverty" (Milgram, 2005: 366). One CWED member defaulted on her loan and could not make her payments, leading to her fellow group members to become less accommodating in helping her financially. Consequently, CWED terminated her membership and then used her savings she had acquired through their program to repay the loan (Ibid.: 366). Another member's cases shows how "CWED members with pre-existing businesses and higher-than-subsistence pooled family incomes can make the best use of credit," illustrating how these aid provisions view poor people as a monolithic group of "budding microentrepreneurs," ready to participate in neoliberal strategies to make them more productive and ensure "a virtuous cycle of income generation, investment and growth (Ibid.: 373).

The assumption that a neoliberal approach to development aid will help poor people become 'productive,' leading to an increase in income, displays the "bias of the Northern development paradigm [which] prioritiz[es] institutional sustainability [and] does not adequately focus on the viability of, and protective strategies for, the often-vulnerable small enterprises that it sponsors" (Ibid.: 373). Development organizations will continue to harm marginalized Filipino women as long as they insist on using neoliberal economic strategies and only focus on making women 'productive' members of the economy.

Other forms of development aid, such as conservation agriculture, can similarly lack awareness of gender inequality's underlying structures and can thus perpetuate gendered labour paradigms that conform to patriarchal views of women's roles. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, conservation agriculture is a "means to increased agricultural activity, food security, and soil quality" (Parks, Christie and Bagares, 2015: 62). Conservative agriculture promotes maintaining year-round crop cover, eliminating tillage to reduce erosion, and rotating crops to increase soil nitrogen levels and decrease the chance of pest infestations. Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sustainable Agriculture and National Resource Management (SANREM), a USAID funded organization, has carried out research in the Philippines since 1994.

SANREM uses the gender dimensions framework (GDF) and livelihood framework to identify gender issues that are relevant to conservation agriculture (Ibid.: 62). GDF includes four overlapping categories: “(1) access and control over assets (tangible and intangible); (2) beliefs and perceptions; (3) practices and participation, and (4) laws, legal rights, and institutions,” while “a livelihood framework considers people’s assets, strategies, and outcomes to recognize and highlight all the components that contribute to a household’s livelihood” (Ibid.: 62-3). Using these two frameworks, Parks, Christie and Bagares found that in the two villages Riza and Patrocenio, located in Claveria, the division of labour was gendered with men working mainly in the fields and women in the home. Furthermore, because men and women have different access to assets such as training and land, besides access to assets, “agricultural practices, and soil knowledge and perception” are likewise gendered (Ibid.: 65-6).

Even though women are legally allowed to own land according to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 (CARL), general attitudes do not favor their land ownership. Parks, Christie and Bagares’s sample showed women did not own land as often as men; their access to land was dependent on their relationship to men. There are many restrictions to women realizing their land ownership rights. To own land, a woman cannot have other sources of income besides farming, even though most women are self-employed in other businesses, and must have been farming a specific piece of land for 5 or more years. These restrictions are specifically targeted at women, who have additional chores such as child-care and which limits their ability to farm, to ensure that they have to overcome many obstacles just to practice their legal land ownership rights (Ibid.: 66).

Because the ownership and care of land is biased towards men, women also do not have the same access to land training. Men are usually the family representatives who attend training sessions since they are considered the head of household, depriving women of useful information. Women must stay home to care for the children, do household chores *and* ‘women’s’ farm work. Park, Christie and Bagares argue that “topography and farmer’s perceptions of strength are linked to gendered spaces, assets, and roles” (Ibid.: 69). In their interviews, “men seldom recognized women’s participation on the farm in the FGDs and interviews,” meanwhile, women name several responsibilities that they have on the farm: mainly weeding, but they also had direct and indirect roles in planting and harvesting (Ibid.: 67). Even

the work that women do on the farm is “linked to a gendered-decision making dynamic” (Ibid.: 67).

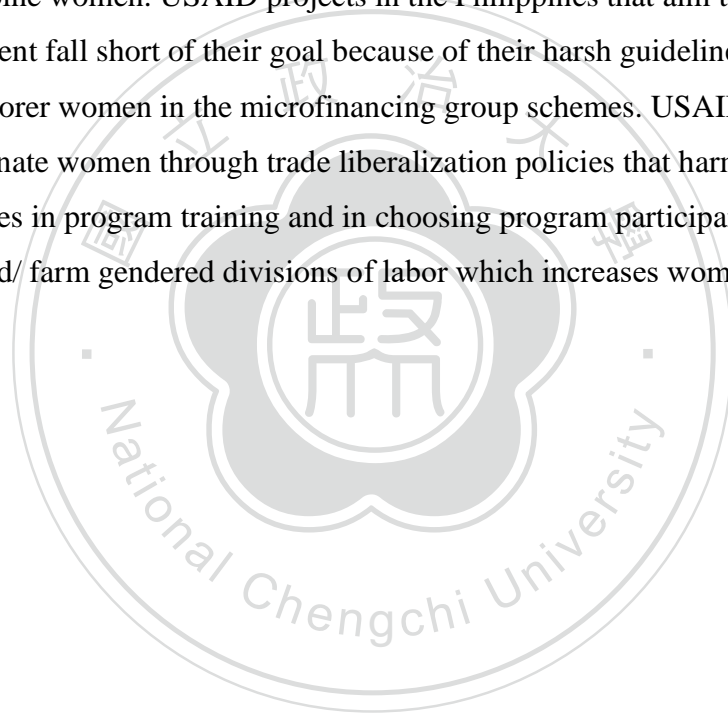
Men are responsible for ‘heavy work,’ such as land preparation work (plowing, furrowing, and harrowing), because as the farmers reported in the interviews, ‘men are stronger than women.’ They also work more on sloping land because it is more dangerous than flat land, which is reserved for women’s work: flat land is easier to work on and if women work on sloped land, it will presumably take them more time to complete the job. Mens’ and women’s gendered division of labour even influenced their understanding of soil quality. For conservation agriculture programs to be effective, they “need to be aware of [these] multiple and gendered knowledge and perceptions of soil in a specific site, how project activities may impact gendered livelihoods, and how these in turn may impact the adoption of CAPS (conservation agriculture production system)” (Ibid.: 75).

To briefly summarize the literature review findings, foreign aid is a hierarchical relationship between the giver and the recipient where the recipient will never gain enough power to in turn become a giver. Symbolic domination is embedded in this relationship; it defines the donor as hierarchically superior to the recipient since the recipient will never attain enough power to be equals with the giver and become a giver in turn. Symbolic domination not only flows through inter-government actions but is also transcribed into the bodily gestures of foreign aid workers, showing how neo-colonialism is not just a ‘thing’ but a process of distinguishing oneself from others based on a constructed racial hierarchy. Foreign aid optimists focus on the need for capital and resources in partner countries, however, foreign aid relationships between donor and recipient rely on a capitalistic and imperialist accumulation of wealth by the donor countries. Imperialism relies not only on capitalism but also on the continued dependency of aid partners to their aid donors. Axel Dreher, Kai Gehring, Stephan Klasen (2015) found it challenging to make a definitive statement on whether donor countries truly increase aid in relation to larger gaps in gender inequality, meaning that donor countries are not necessarily likely to focus their attention on states that have higher rates of gender inequality.

Postcolonial feminism is essential for focusing on issues of ‘voice’ and giving space for women who are marginalized by mainstream feminism and development efforts to voice their concerns. Postcolonial feminist scholars believe that foreign aid is a tool of colonialism to further subjugate and marginalize certain groups in the Third World, such as Third World Women.

Northern foreign aid paradigms perpetuate Liberal and capitalist understanding of development, either ignoring women's informal contributions to the economy or actively harming them through implementing policies that only aim to make them active, participating members of the economy without providing necessary related services, such as childcare, and without addressing pre-existing economic, political, and social matrices. Foreign aid directed at women rarely has to do with liberating them from existing patriarchal and capitalist paradigms, and instead seeks to make women better economic tools for production.

US colonial influence and institutions still exist in the Philippines, making it an important site for inquiry into the intersections of colonialism and postcolonialism of modern US aid and its impact on Philippine women. USAID projects in the Philippines that aim to make women financially independent fall short of their goal because of their harsh guidelines and inability to foster support for poorer women in the microfinancing group schemes. USAID agricultural aid continues to subordinate women through trade liberalization policies that harm small Philippine farmers, gender biases in program training and in choosing program participants, and through not addressing household/ farm gendered divisions of labor which increases women's burdens.



Chapter Three: Research Method

This thesis implements a qualitative research method that relies on interviews of three people, a development project worker as well as two women participants, as well as secondary sources such as USAID project evaluation documents. Qualitative studies rely on data collected from methods such as interviews, instead of statistics and numerical data, to draw conclusions about certain phenomena. Interviews are a personal form of data collection and can offer deep insight into how people think of and deal with certain situations, while secondary sources can also offer insight that helps support the interviewee responses. Such methods are essential in postcolonial feminist studies because the goal of postcolonial feminism is to highlight and center the voices of marginalized women.

The purpose of the interviews is to see if and how women's lives are impacted from USAID programs. The secondary literature, USAID project evaluation documents, will also offer support for the interviewee's responses. The interview responses are especially important because they provide a deeper and more personal understanding of the impacts of USAID projects on the lives of women. Even though this thesis was only able to conduct three interviews, the interviewee responses still offer insight on the impacts of USAID development programs on Philippine women. Analyzing the interview responses along with examining the secondary literature, this thesis can draw some conclusions on the ability of USAID projects to empower women.

Interview Arrangement

I reached out to organizations via email, LinkedIn, and Facebook. I contacted twenty-four various NGO, educational, and CSO organizations⁷. The representative from Agriterra Philippines, the only person who agreed to help me with interviews, was likewise contacted through email, and all correspondents between us were likewise through email. The Agriterra Philippines GROW Coop (Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives) representative conducted the interviews with the two women in person.

⁷ See Appendix: Contacts to see the full list of organizations

Qualitative Investigation

Out of all the organizations I contacted, only representatives from Agriterra Philippines were able to assist me in conducting interviews with program personnel as well as putting me in touch with women who participated in the programs. Agriterra is a Dutch NGO that aims to “make cooperatives bankable and create real farmer-led businesses. We improve extension services to members and enhance farmer-government dialogues. We use Agripool, our knowledge broker agency which is a unique pool of hundreds of agricultural experts from the Netherlands and other countries” (Agriterra). In the Philippines, Agriterra works with the Fatima Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Federation of Peoples Sustainable Development Cooperative (FPSDC), and the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC). Agriterra Philippines is a grantee of USAID through their Local Works Office, and according to the business advisor at Agriterra Philippines, one component that they are focusing on is the inclusion of gender and development in generating rural opportunities through working with Cooperatives. Agriterra Philippines implements the GROW Coop project, which seeks to:

[expand] rural livelihood opportunities and [boost] rural households’ incomes by facilitating the development of large, successful local cooperatives, federations and private companies into Local Resource Organizations (LROs). These organizations will provide in-depth mentoring, capacity development, and support participation in value chains to growth-oriented (small, micro and medium) agri-based cooperatives (Female Leadership, Agriterra Philippines and Grow Coop).

According to a video, “International Women’s Month 2022,” on the Agriterra Philippines Facebook page, the GROW Coop project, implemented/funded by USAID and Agriterra, in 2021:

Table 9: GROW Coop Training

Training of Trainers	Percentage Women
Basic Financial Management	80% (8 out of 10)
MyCoop	53% (7 out of 13)
AgriCoop Marketing	54% (6 out of 11)
Governance	66% (6 out of 9)

(Agriterra Philippines, 2022)

In all the above training programs conducted by Agriterra Philippines and GROW Coop, women were the majority of participants. The video further states that “Agriterra Philippines observes gender balance during its activities” and that “Gender balance was observed in the conduct of Scoping and Cooperative assessments” (Agriterra Philippines, 2022). In addition, 36 women out of 73 total respondents (49.3%) were consulted during consultations among local agricultural cooperatives. However, only 63 out of 168 total members (37.5%) were women under the Agro-Enterprise clustering program (could not find specific details on this program).

I first reached out to the Agriterra Business Advisor and GROW Coop Coordinator, on April 20th, asking if they were available for interview or if they could connect me with others who could assist me. They responded on April 25th with the following message:

As a grantee of USAID through the Local Works Office in the Philippines, one component that they are focusing on is the inclusion of Gender Development in the implementation of their project such as Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives. To ensure that it is carried out, it is part of our M&E as well as specific initiatives is included by Agriterra as their implementing partner.

On April 25th, I asked again if they could answer some interview questions or if they could connect me with people who could be interviewed. On May 1st, they forwarded my email requesting an interview to two “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” project workers. The purpose of this project is to connect small farm cooperatives with larger more established cooperatives to help build their capacity by providing training, advisory services, and learning exchange opportunities. This project’s goal is to contribute in improving the socio-economic conditions of women and men farmers and their communities and to expand rural livelihood opportunities.

I reached out to the project workers on May 3rd, with worker A responding on May 4th. I emailed worker A the interview questions for both the project worker and for women participants, but unfortunately, they did not respond. Worker B sent his responses via email on May 13th, along with responses from two women participants: Participant A and Participant B. I was not given much information on these two women’s background information, and they did not give a very detailed response when asked to introduce themselves, most likely to protect their privacy. Worker B interviewed the women for me and recorded their responses since one of them does not have social media or an email address and her phone number was unreachable, and the

other woman was only available by phone during her office hours. Worker B drove two hours to reach the woman whose phone was unreachable to interview her in person, and I am incredibly grateful for their efforts.

I used a postcolonial feminist lens to formulate the questions for Worker B, with some questions leaning more towards the feminist side while others, such as the “Were there activities that Agriterra Philippines and GROW Coop wanted to implement but could not because of roadblocks from USAID?” question, was more postcolonial in nature. I asked Worker B the following questions:

1. Could you give a brief introduction of your role in Agriterra Philippines?
2. Could you please explain the aid project you worked on?
3. What was your role in this project?
4. What were the goals of the project? Were these goals met?
5. How were project actors/implementers trained? Did training include education on issues of gender equality? What was the gender breakdown of project workers?
6. Were project participants also trained on gender equality and women’s empowerment? If so, were men involved in this training?
7. How did the project impact women socially? Economically? For example: did this project elevate the women participant’s household standing? Did this project challenge traditional gender roles and include women in more activities and responsibilities?
8. Were there related services provided to the women involved such as child-care? If not, why so?
9. Were there activities that Agriterra Philippines and GROW Coop wanted to implement but could not because of roadblocks from USAID?
10. Do you think this project could have been improved? If so, how?

Overall, these questions lean more towards the feminist side of post-colonial feminism, asking how the program workers were trained, if men and women were both involved in the training and program activities, how project participants were trained in gender issues, how the project impacted women socially and economically, and if they could not implement certain activities due to USAID roadblocks (this question was made using post-colonialism in mind).

The questions I formulated for the two women participants focused more on the post-colonial side of post-colonial feminism, questioning the program’s ability to empower them and if the

program increased their responsibilities and burdens. The questions for the two women participants are as follows:

1. Could you introduce yourself?
2. Why did you want to participate in this program? What were your expectations?
3. How did this program affect your pre-existing responsibilities? Did it add any responsibilities?
4. Are you able to apply what you learned in the program after it concluded/ outside of the program?
5. How did this program impact your relationships within your family and with others in your community? For example: do you and your husband now share child-care and farming responsibilities equally? Or did these jobs remain unchanged?
6. Did this program help make you feel empowered? In what ways? Are you now more financially independent? Or do you feel like you have more jobs to do now?
7. How would you improve this program?

The above questions differ slightly from the original questions posed in the “Research Method” section of this thesis because these initial questions focused too much on the feminist aspect of post-colonial feminism, and I wanted to make sure that the questions reflected both aspects of this thesis’s ideological framework. The following were the original questions for woman participants in USAID projects:

1. What are your daily responsibilities? What are your husband’s?
2. How many hours a day do you work? How many of those hours are paid?
3. How many hours a day does your husband work? How many of those are paid?
4. What USAID program did you participate in? What services did it provide?
5. How did this program effect the number of hours you work/ your responsibilities?
6. Did this program give you opportunities you otherwise would not have?
7. How did this program impact your family finances?
8. How did this program impact your social relations within your family and with others in your community?
9. Do you think this program helped you? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
10. How would you improve this project?

The following was the original list of questions for aid workers involved in these programs:

1. Could you please explain the aid project you worked on?
2. What were the goals of the project? Were these goals met?
3. What was your role?
4. How were project actors/implementers trained? Did training include education on issues of gender inequality?
5. How did the project impact women socially? Economically?
6. Do you think this project could have been improved? If so, how?

I think that the current interview questions better reflect both aspects of post-colonial feminism, even though I had a harder time formulating questions that were post-colonial in nature because I did not want my questions to be leading or too upfront about critiquing USAID. I think that I should have kept some of the questions for the women participants, such as asking about how many hours they work, how many hours their husbands work, and how many hours are they paid, because their responses to the questions I did use were not very specific.

The following are the responses from Mr. Roger and the two women participants, exactly how Mr. Roger emailed them to me:

Table 10: Worker B Responses

Question	Response
1. Could you give a brief introduction of your role in Agriterra Philippines?	I am [REDACTED] in implementing the GROWCoop project of Agriterra Philippines in our area. I am working with Fatima Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Calubian, Leyte, Philippines.
2. Could you please explain the aid project you worked on?	GROWCoop Project means "Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives Project". The idea is to capacitate farmers' cooperatives through the help of established/bigger cooperatives. Agriterra Philippines labelled big ccops as LRO (Local Resource Organization). In our case, we are the LRO that served as the big brother for the two small farmers' coops. We call the small cooperatives GOACs (Growth Oriented Agricultural Cooperatives). We assist them in

	terms of providing training, advisory services and learning exchange.
3. What was your role in this project?	I was in-charge of the implementation of the project on the ground. I see to it that it was aligned with the planned activities and budget. It is also my task to monitor the progress or failure with regards to the goals of the project. I am the direct contact of Agriterria Philippines from the LRO.
4. What were the goals of the project? Were these goals met?	The ultimate goals of the project; 1. to contribute in improving the socio-economic conditions of female and male farmers and their communities and, 2. to expand rural livelihood opportunities. As a general conclusion, the goals were met as per determined indicators.
5. How were project actors/implementers trained? Did training include education on issues of gender equality? What was the gender breakdown of project workers?	One of the interventions to the GOACs is Female Leadership Training. Facilitators of the training are coming from the LRO who underwent Training of Trainers. Agriterria Philippines conducted the ToT and we rolled-out the training.
6. Were project participants also trained on gender equality and women's empowerment? If so, were men involved in this training?	Gender equality and women empowerment are included in the training of project participants. The conducted training has a majority of female participants with around 35%-40% male attendance.
7. How did the project impact women socially? Economically? For example: did this project elevate the women participant's household standing? Did this project challenge traditional gender roles and include women in more activities and responsibilities?	In terms of social impact, it's notable that women were now present in the organizations' board. There also emerged female leaders within the farmers' group. The training was re-echoed to their respective groups and served as eye-opener to them that was not yet gender sensitized. Household standing of women participants were not yet captured by the monitoring as of the moment but we're optimistic that we will see the same impact as to what we have seen within their small organizations.
8. Were there related services provided to the women involved such as child-care? If not, why so?	None, there is no specific child-care provided services. There might be indirect impact since educating the parents about their role as male

	and female in the household could mean knowledge in balancing roles and responsibilities. This knowledge can be a big factor in responsible parenthood.
9. Were there activities that Agriterra Philippines and GROW Coop wanted to implement but could not because of roadblocks from USAID?	I can't relate because I am not working inside Agriterra Philippines. I am from a local resource organization and we are not directly in contact with USAID. I am limited to the information from Agriterra only with regards to the Grow Coop project...
10. Do you think this project could have been improved? If so, how?	Yes! the impact of the interventions by the project can't be seen immediately. Some may take time, some may not, but the overall time frame in order to see better impacts on the beneficiaries need to be adjusted. The project beneficiaries were overwhelmed of the implementations i.e. training provision.

Table 11: Participant A Responses

Question	Response
1. Could you introduce yourself?	My name is [REDACTED], a farmer and treasurer of CANIFA (Canfabi Integrated Farmers' Association)
2. Why did you want to participate in this program? What were your expectations?	To improve my knowledge and to learn more about leadership and how women play vital roles as leaders. I expected to be empowered as a woman and be a good leader
3. How did this program affect your pre-existing responsibilities? Did it add any responsibilities?	The program is good for me, it helped and guide me in my pre-existing responsibilities as treasurer of our organization. It adds responsibilities at the same time it adds awareness.
4. Are you able to apply what you learned in the program after it concluded/ outside of the program?	Yes, I will apply what I have learned in this program
5. How did this program impact your relationships within your family and with others in your community? For	In our family, we are already practicing sharing of farm and household chores. But the learning I got from the training adds value and

example: do you and your husband now share child-care and farming responsibilities equally? Or did these jobs remain unchanged?	helped me lead in my own little way the family in planning and decision making. In the association, this program helped us change what needs to be changed in terms of gender-equality and to have improvements by sharing responsibilities and opportunities equally to both women and men.
6. Did this program help make you feel empowered? In what ways? Are you now more financially independent? Or do you feel like you have more jobs to do now?	Yes, I feel empowered by expressing myself more as a farmer. For now, as a farmer, financial matter is hard so I like to have stable job to earn and to improve our living condition.
7. How would you improve this program?	I will share my knowledge to my co-farmers, this could help improve the program

Table 12: Participant B Responses

Question	Reponse
1. Could you introduce yourself?	My name is [REDACTED], a farmer-member of CANIFA (Canfabi Integrated Farmers' Association)
2. Why did you want to participate in this program? What were your expectations?	To seek experience in the field of leadership. I expect to gain knowledge in terms of how to be a good female leader
3. How did this program affect your pre-existing responsibilities? Did it add any responsibilities?	The program is a good opportunity for me to expand my reach in helping my fellow farmers. Yes it adds responsibility and I am happy to learn that.
4. Are you able to apply what you learned in the program after it concluded/ outside of the program?	Yes, I will apply the learning even after the conclusion of the program.
5. How did this program impact your relationships within your family and with others in your community? For example: do you and your husband now share child-care and farming responsibilities equally? Or did these jobs remain unchanged?	In our family, my husband and I are sharing household and farming chores long before since we got married. But there were times that we argue on deciding small things. We have a realization after the training and its to most impactful thing that the training taught us. The training made us more stronger as a couple and as a family.

6. Did this program help make you feel empowered? In what ways? Are you now more financially independent? Or do you feel like you have more jobs to do now?	Yes, I am empowered and can stand my rights now as a member of the association and as woman in the community.
7. How would you improve this program?	I will apply my learning and will do my part as a productive individual. Share the knowledge to my fellow farmers and cooperate in future programs related to gender.

I greatly appreciate Worker B's efforts in answering my questions as well as assisting me in interviewing the two women participants, Participant A and Participant B. Reflecting on my interview questions for the two women participants, I should have made the questions more specific to get them to offer deeper and more specific explanations. I should also have clarified what I meant by certain words, such as 'responsibilities.' Participant A and Participant B's response to the question about if the project increased their responsibilities implies that they interpreted 'responsibility' as in the program helped them become more responsible, whereas I meant 'responsibility' as in household duties.

Even though this thesis was only able to conduct three interviews, the interviewee responses offer insights into both the positives and shortcomings of USAID agricultural projects in the Philippines. The interviews were essential for this thesis in pursuing the postcolonial feminist goal of centering and giving space for marginalized women to give their opinions on development projects that impact their lives, and to highlight these narratives in development practices. Secondary sources, such as USAID project evaluations, will be valuable additions in analyzing the interviewee responses and are likewise essential sources of information for investigating USAID project impacts and their ability to either empower women or to further compound their marginalization.

Secondary Literature Investigation:

The following Table 12 shows the different documents this thesis analyzes. These secondary sources include evaluation documents on health, a cold chain project, an ocean and fisheries project, and a gender training project.

Table 13: Secondary Source Overview

	Health	Agriculture	Aquaculture	Gender
Evaluation		“Baseline Study Report: Philippine Cold Chain Project (PCCP)”	“Performance Evaluation of USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership”	“Report on Gender Analysis Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop: Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Project”
Analysis	“Health Labor Market Analysis of the Philippines”			

Besides using a post-colonial feminist perspective to create my interview questions, the following secondary sources also influenced the questions I asked and can offer more insight into the impacts of USAID projects on women’s livelihoods that can either support or challenge the interviewee responses. On the USAID website, I was unable to find any documents specifically on agriculture and gender, however the following documents discuss gender issues. The USAID “Health Labor Market Analysis of the Philippines” found that in 2019, there is a gender imbalance in health care labor, especially in barangay, or village, health stations, reinforcing that care facilities are primarily “women’s centers” (USAID, 2020: 27). Not only is there this misconception, but in the healthcare industry men tend to have higher wages than women. On average, 8% of men health workers earn more than 8% of women (Ibid.: 33).

This document recommends that men should be included more in midwifery and primary care practices to not only address the gendered pay gap but also gendered work imbalance. Even though this report does not involve agriculture, there are 2,953 rural health centers, and even though this number only reaches less than half of all Philipinos (Santos, 2021), the trend of women earning less than men is consistent across various fields and adds evidence to gender inequality in rural and agricultural settings.

The “Baseline Study Report: Philippine Cold Chain Project (PCCP)” by Balay Mindanaw, Winrock International, and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture): primarily focus[ed] on providing benefits at the producer level to improve production, inputs, technology and practices at the farm level. Collaborating with producer groups, intermediate organizations, and larger scale cold chain related business, PCCP will assist farm families

increase income, improve nutrition and food security, and provide higher value agricultural products to new markets that require a cold chain (Balay Mindanaw, et. al., 2013: 10).

Even though USAID was not directly involved in this project, this document was found on the USAID documents' website and since the USDA was acting as a foreign aid implementer, I will count it as a US foreign aid activity.

The proportion of this report's targeted farming and fishing households in the north-eastern part of Mindanao tend to be much poorer than the general population (Balay Mindanaw, et. al., 2013: 21). 87.27% of these households have at least one family member who is self-employed, making up 46.7% of the labor force. A little over 30% of women are employed, while under 30% of women are self-employed. In "Agriculture Indicators System: Employment and Wages in the Agriculture Sector," the Philippines Statistics Authority found that from 2015 to 2019, the total employment of women in agriculture in all 17 regions declined from 19% in 2015 to 13.6% in 2019. The total number of men employed in agriculture in all 17 regions likewise fell from 35.8% in 2015 to 28.7% in 2019, however the percentage for employed men is still 15.1% higher than women's agricultural employment. In 2015, 29.2% of employed Filipinos worked in agriculture, whereas in 2019 this dropped to 22.9% (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020).

The "Baseline Study Report: Philippine Cold Chain Project" found that 92.9% of rural Philippine households depend on rice as a staple food, 28.1% for corn, root crops make up 52.2%, while bananas, or saba, is a staple for 25.5% of households (Balay Mindanaw, et. al., 2013; 29). Around 23.4% of households have at least one member who has gone through some form of agriculture training (Ibid.: 31). The following table shows the training topic and the percentage of women and men trained for each topic.

Table 14: PCCP Training Results

Training Topics	% of Respondents Trained	% Women	% Men
Banana	4.8	37.4	62.6
Eggplant	0.1	0	100
Mango	3.6	37.4	62.6
Vegetable seed production	0.1	100	0
Vegetables	6.0	58.2	41.8
Artificial insemination	0.1	0	100
Coconut	10.8	54.5	45.5
Rice	11.4	50.6	49.9
Other Crops	6.0	47.3	52.7
Agriculture/Farming	12.0	47.3	52.7
Natural/organic farming	9.6	49.9	50.1
Sustainable/Integrated farming systems	7.2	54.5	45.5
Integrated pest control	6.6	51.1	48.9
Pesticides/ pest control	3.6	23.0	77.0
Organic fertilizer	8.4	59.9	40.1
Vermiculture	3.0	47.3	52.7
Fertilizer application	10.8	54.5	45.5
Seed growing (rice)	3.0	70.5	29.5
Irrigation	4.2	59.9	40.1
Organizational management	7.2	54.5	45.5
Financial management	0.1	100	0
ALL	23.4	49.4	50.6

Source: Balay Mindanaw, et. al., 2013: 31

Even though Table 14 shows that women and men were fairly equally involved in different trainings:

Vegetable production is still an area dominated by males. However, an increasing number of women are now involved in backyard vegetable production. Of special interest is the number of widows in a vegetable association in Bislig. These widows have resorted to backyard vegetable production to support their families. Women are primarily involved in the retail and trading of fruits and vegetables. In fact, most of the retailers and traders interviewed were women. According to one major female retailer/viajero, fruit and vegetable trading was a means of being financially independent from their husbands. The labor sector of the supply chain also employs more men. In particular are the “habalhabal” drivers who serve as jamboleros when prices are high and workers in the mango spray contracting business (Ibid.: 48).

Furthermore, “mostly women, take on support or administrative functions” (Balay Mindanaw, et al., 2013; 105). While women were targeted for the training sessions, men and women still follow gendered roles in their daily agricultural responsibilities.

The “Performance Evaluation of USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership” (USAID, 2020) can also be a useful secondary source to see how USAID projects involve and impact Philippine women. Fisheries tend to be grouped together as the same category as agriculture, for example the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries, or the Philippine Census of Agriculture and Fisheries, so this document is still applicable to this thesis. This report contracted Social Impact to conduct a performance evaluation on USAID activities involving the ocean. The United States Agency for International Development’s Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (USAID Oceans) seeks to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, increase sustainable fisheries, and protect marine biodiversity from 2015-2020 with a budget of \$20 million USD (USAID, 2020; viii).

For the cumulative financial year from 2016-2019, the USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership had the targeted goal of drafting, proposing, or adopting 4 legal instruments to address gender inequality against women and girls (Ibid.: 4). However, they were not able to draft, propose, or adopt any such instruments. Furthermore, the “Performance Evaluation of USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership” likewise found that:

While stakeholders consistently noted an increased awareness of these issues, there was less evidence of actions taken to improve gender equity beyond the

establishment of gender focal persons in SEAFDEC [Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center] and BFAR [Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Philippines]. USAID Oceans has recently signed agreements with partners in both Indonesia and the Philippines for projects related to HW/GE [Human Welfare/Gender Equity], but at the time of the evaluation, the workplans and objectives were still being developed (Ibid.: 28).

Even though stakeholders claim that their awareness of gender inequality issues had increased, they did not follow through on adequate actions to promote gender equality. The report further states that:

USAID Oceans (along with the SEAFDEC-Sweden project) has significantly enhanced awareness of the importance of gender and human welfare concerns in fisheries and produced tools for gender analysis and integration into fisheries management. They have supported the integration of HW/GE [Human Welfare/Gender Equity] into SFMPs [Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan] and in the KDEs [Key data element] of eCDT [Electronic catch documentation and traceability] systems, but to date, these actions have had little, if any, appreciable impact on the lives of women and other marginalized groups. Translating the changes generated by the activity into improvements for women and marginalized groups will take time and depends heavily on the effective implementation of the SFMPs [Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan] (USAID, 2020; 29).

While USAID Oceans states their commitment to promote gender equality and raised gender awareness amongst stakeholders, this project failed to pass necessary legal instruments to promote non-discrimination and gender equality and “have had little, if any, appreciable impact on the lives of women and other marginalized groups” (Ibid.: 29).

Another USAID project in the Philippines, “Water Security Under Climate Risks: A Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Agriculture Sector (Bicol Agri-Water Project): Final Report 2012-2017,” sought to “enhance climate change adaptation for food security through improved irrigation water management” by testing the effectiveness of climate change adaptation strategies in Nabua and Buhi in Camarines Sur and Polangui in Albay, Philippine farming communities (USAID, 2020: i). The Bicol Agri-Water Project (BAWP) also

worked to improve irrigation water management via promoting improved watershed management strategies and worked with farming communities and local governments of watershed areas in an attempt to decrease the effects of climate change on lowland rice farming communities in Nabua, Camarines Sur (USAID, 2020; i).

In addition, BAWP implemented a Climate Field School in 14 farming barangays in three municipalities: Barangays Sta. Cruz, Monte Calvario, Dela Fe, Sagrada and Iraya in Buhi, Camarines Sur; Barangays San Vicente, San Esteban, San Antonio Ogon, and San Roque Madawon in Nabua, Camarines Sur; and Barangays Balangibang, Pintor, La Medalla, Kinuartelan and Gamot in Polangui, Albay. The Climate Field School conducted a series of lectures and “hands-on exercises in the field” for a whole cropping cycle, providing the farmers with agriculture and water management practices and technologies and local climate information to “enhance their capacity in planning and decision making to improve farming practices” (USAID, 2020; 12).

Table 15: Number of Farmers Trained on Climate Change Adaptation for Agriculture

Municipality	2012-2013		2013-2014		Actual		Target		Deviation (%)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Buhi	75	78	16	46	91	124	75	75	21.33	65.33
Nabua	49	77	33	21	82	98	30	30	173.33	226.67
Polangui	81	84	17	39	98	123	75	75	30.67	64
TOTAL	205	239	66	106	271	345	180	180	50.56	91.67

Source: USAID, 2020: 13

For each municipality of Buhi, Nabua, and Polangui, overall, more women farmers were trained than men within the two time periods 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. Only from 2013-2014 in Nabua where more men (33) trained than women (21).

Table 16: Number of Farmers Adopting Climate Risk Management for Agriculture

Municipality	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		Actual		Target		Deviation (%)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Buhi	31	24	53	45	101	90	117	102	75	75	56	36
Nabua	37	14	59	58	79	81	95	98	30	30	216.67	226.67
Polangui	25	24	38	55	45	46	56	66	75	75	25.33	12
TOTAL	93	62	150	158	225	217	268	266	180	180	48.89	47.78

Source: USAID, 2020: 13

Even though overall more women were trained in the Climate Field School, overall, more men adopted the climate risk management strategies for agriculture that was taught. The only exception is the municipality of Polangui, where from 2015-2015 and from 2016-2017, more women adopted these strategies than men (55 women versus 38 men from 2015-2016 and 46 women versus 45 men from 2016-2017). The average age of the farmers who participated in this study ranged from 52 to 56 years old, which “could have also affected their ability to learn new things from the school” according to partners in the Climate Field School. These partners also noted that “more women farmers attended the school, not just for the knowledge and skills but also as an opportunity to socialize. In the school, females were able to show off their fashionable selves which was good for their morale” (USAID, 2020: 13).

Table 17: Number of Local Government Unit (LGU) Stakeholders and Other Partners with Increased Capacity for Irrigation Water Policy Analysis and Advocacy

Trainings/Roundtable Discussions	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		Annual Target		Average Deviation	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Training	33	14	16	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	15	63	23
RTDs														
National	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	11	15	15	20	27
Watershed														
-Buhi Barit	20	7	10	6	9	3	17	15	-	-	15	15	7	48
-Quinala A	15	2	16	6	10	6	8	7	15	13	15	15	15	55
Municipal--														
Buhi	19	8	12	3	14	9	17	7	-	-	5	5	210	35
Nabua	12	12	11	14	13	10	11	5	-	-	5	5	135	105
Polangui	12	6	11	5	10	6	13	4	-	-	5	5	130	5
TOTAL	127	35	60	34	56	34	66	38	27	24	75	75	71	5

Source: USAID, 2020: 28

Table 17 shows from 2012-2017, stakeholder participation in all three municipalities and strong engagement with Local Government Units surpassed annual targets. However, women's representation fell to less than half at the "sub-watershed level where participants are invited by Chair agencies of the sub-watershed councils and where key officials were mostly male," while at the national level, "participation of both male and female groups was almost equal; deviation was a result of fewer participants than targeted due to spatial and temporal constraints of national in-scope arrangements" (Ibid.: 31). From 2013 to 2014, the failure to meet representation targets for women was due to the "Buhi-Barit sub-watershed key officials composed of several male concerned officials" (Ibid.: 31).

The Climate Field School was able to train a majority of women in Climate Change Adaptation strategies for agriculture, but it was mostly men farmers who adopted the climate risk management strategies for agriculture. USAID hosted a "Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Participatory Gender Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop" from May 18th-19th, 2016, in Makati City, Philippines. 33 SURGE project employees, including 23 women and 10 men from administrative and technical teams

participated. The “Report on Gender Analysis Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop: Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Project” (2016) stated the following USAID gender indicators:

1. Number of laws, policies, or procedures drafted, proposed or adopted to promote gender equality at the regional, national or local level
2. Proportion of female participants in USG assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, employment)
3. Proportion of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming
4. Proportion of target population reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities
5. Number of laws, policies or procedures drafted, proposed, or adopted with USG assistance designed to improve prevention of or response to sexual and gender based violence at the regional, national or local level (USAID, 2016: 27).

Furthermore, this project report cites the 2012 USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, which states “unequivocally that USAID’s effectiveness is directly related to its ability to recognize and address gender-related issues and constraints in order to produce lasting transformational development” (Ibid.: 1).

After the Gender Analysis Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop, the “Report on Gender Analysis Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop: Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Project” offers the following recommendations:

Table 18: SURGE Recommendations

Gender and Social Inclusion Issue	Proposed Recommendations
Lack of women’s representation and meaningful participation in water related decision making processes and empowerment activities	Review and formulate guidelines to ensure that women are involved and mobilized in empowerment activities
Absence of gender strategic programs for women to access economic opportunities	Initiate enterprise development related training or livelihood training for women micro entrepreneurs
Inability of program implementers to identify gender issues and corresponding inclusive investment programs	Strengthen skills of program implementers through basic gender sensitivity training and sectoral training on gender responsive investment programming
Gender blind regulations and administrative procedures	Review and update regulations and administrative procedures to ensure gender responsiveness
Lack of access of women and marginalized group to trainings in relation to economic productivity	Intensify information dissemination campaign of relevant business activities and networking for women micro entrepreneurs. Conduct and sustain enterprise related capacity development activities for women micro entrepreneurs

Source: USAID, 2016: 34

Table 18 highlights the importance of gender training for both aid workers and aid project participants, leading me to include interview questions of this nature.

The secondary sources investigated, “Baseline Study Report: Philippine Cold Chain Project,” “Performance Evaluation of USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership,” BAWP, and the “SURGE Participatory Gender Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop,” show that even if women are targeted for project training sessions, men and women still follow gendered roles in their daily agricultural responsibilities; even if stakeholders are more aware of gender inequality issues due to project intervention, they are unlikely to take actions to address it; and that development projects tend to have gender blind regulations that are not inclusive. These project evaluations provide insight into the efficacy of USAID projects in empowering Philippine women and will be useful when analyzed in conjunction with the interviewee responses.

Chapter 4: USAID Agriculture Projects and Women’s Empowerment in the Philippines

This thesis analyzes the interviewee response and secondary sources using a postcolonial feminist framework. Postcolonial feminism connects postcolonial paradigms with feminism by focusing on the voices of subaltern, or marginalized, Third World women and their oppression under globalized capitalism and liberalism (Mohanty, 1984, Sylvester, 1999, Sa’ar, 2005). The Third World Women movement originated from the “rise of socialist feminism in the developed world and postcolonial feminism, which had emerged out of the dramatic growth of a Third World Women’s movement in the 1980s” (Baden and Goetz 1997; Jaquette and Staudt 2006). Questions such as “How [do] current struggles for liberation and justice link to past struggles, to anticapitalist, antiracist, and feminist struggles?” are central to postcolonial feminist investigations (Asher, 2017: 516). Along with asking questions of this nature, postcolonial feminist studies also necessitate challenging and revealing contradictions and the harm western aid paradigms, such as capitalism, can cause Third World Women. A postcolonial feminist framework allows this thesis to:

4. Analyze how development projects change or perpetuate underlying harmful economic structures;
5. Highlight the connection between issues of imperialism in development and how it shapes gender inequalities; and
6. Examine how institutions reflect and, in turn, perpetuate harmful paradigms.

The ultimate goal of postcolonial feminism is to engage in women’s emancipatory battle, liberating women from these oppressive imperialist structures so that they can be fully empowered.

Engaging in a postcolonial feminist framework, this chapter addresses the three following themes, “US Colonial Legacy in Relation to Philippine Agriculture,” “USAID Aims and Practices in the Philippines: Women and Agriculture,” and “Consequences of USAID Agriculture Projects on Philippine Women’s Empowerment.” These sections trace US colonial systems and paradigms to modern day USAID practices, showing that US imperialist and capitalist strategies interfere with Philippine women’s liberation.

US Colonial Legacy in Relation to Philippine Agriculture

US power-knowledge formations from the period of their colonial rule of the Philippines sets the stage for current capitalist and liberal structures that influence the kinds of agricultural development aid that Philippine women receive. To understand why the US colonial administration justified their abuse of Philippine farmland, we need to first understand how they subjugated the Philippine people based on racist beliefs. Racial difference was used to indicate the inherent inferiority of Filipinos by the US colonial administration. The racial hierarchy that was constructed between the white US citizens in the Philippines and the native Filipinos of color was “not merely a justification for economic imperialism, but in actuality part of the infrastructure of capitalism itself” (Lumba, 2015: 615-6). This racial narrative “emphasized that Filipinos as a people did not yet understand democracy ... therefore they could not establish an independent nation alone and needed the help of the United States, an established democracy” (Caronan, 2012: 342). US colonial policy, such as their land and agricultural policies, was situated to pursue their own interests without regard for preexisting traditions and norms (Klock, 1995).

Growing crops for export and for US citizens living in Manilla “became the government’s first priority”, and the Bureau of Agriculture was established to increase food production and to diversify crops, mainly for US soldiers (Ibid.: 9-10). The US colonial administration did this to pursue their own economic strategies and did so with little regard for the negative impacts their export-focused strategies had on the domestic Philippine economy. Focusing too much on the export sector can cause various problems for a country, such as limiting internal markets and preventing the growth of a middle class and impeding economic development (Watson, 2013). Not only did the US colonial administrators have little regard for the Philippine economy, but they also disrespected and violated traditional agricultural land practices.

US’s agriculture and forest policies in the Ifugao territory in Luzon were likewise implemented to suit US interests, and their newly enforced “land laws ran counter to ancestral land claims in Ifugao” (Klock, 1995: 12). The Ifugao people had a history of ancestral forest and land management, however, new US policies, such as the 1902 Land Tenure Act, the 1905 Public Land Act, and the Mining Law of 1905 (which “declared that Americans could purchase land under the guise of mining activities,” suspended Ifugao traditional law and weakened their

ability to protect their forests and land, leaving it susceptible to US exploitation (Ibid.: 10). And even though the Land Tenure Act of 1902 “was intended to protect small farmers from land grabbers... It did not shield the small farmers” (Ibid.: 4, 6, 15) The Land Tenure Act continued to have a negative influence “throughout the next forty years,” where “a Filipino elite would pass a cascade of land tenure laws in Congress to serve their own needs or take advantage of peasants at the local level” (Ibid.: 4, 6, 15). These US enforced land acts failed to protect farmers because they did not “take into account ancestral domain issues, expensive documentation fees, tribal suspicions and illiteracy, and the substitution of a paper document for verbal agreements” (Ibid.: 10).

Not only did the US leave behind a certain legacy in the Philippine agriculture sector, but US led education reproduced US history and ideology (Caronan, 2012), and ingrained certain understandings of race, class and gender (Kirsch, 2017), making an analysis of US colonial education in the Philippines pertinent to understanding how gender is constructed in agricultural settings. US implemented education systems “serve[d] as a cover for economic, political, cultural, and religious hegemony” (Milligan, 2000: 110). Caronan argues that “in order for assimilation to appear benevolent, the United States needed to secure and maintain the consent of the native populations to be ruled. To attain this goal, systems of public education were established in the new island colonies to reproduce US history and ideology” (Caronan, 2012: 338). The moral imperative to ‘help’ Filipino people by educating them in a specifically US manner “implied the presence of a moral, cultural, or intellectual, as well as a material, deficiency among the people we hoped to help”. Legitimizing US methods of education while invalidating local methods and histories “has served to create and maintain a neocolonial identity among Filipinos that benefits the United States” (Milligan, 2000: 110-4). Education was yet another tool to ingrain US imperialism on “intimate, embodied relations of cultural authority, race, nation, class, and gender” (Kirsch, 2017: 321).

During their colonization of the Philippines, the US enforced strict, patriarchal, Anglo-Saxon cultural standards (Lumba, 2015), setting a precedent for women’s rights regarding agricultural land ownership and gendered divisions of labor that exist in agricultural spaces to this day. Even though women are legally allowed to own land according to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 (CARL), general attitudes do not favor their land ownership.

Parks, Christie and Bagares's sample showed women did not own land as often as men; their access to land was dependent on their relationship to men.

The US's discriminatory practices towards Filipinos during colonization translates into a lack of awareness of such racial and gendered issues in development projects in the 21st century. Gonzalez states that "The gendered violence of American foreign policy and globalization, after all, continues to be lived out, negotiated, and unsettled in the bodies and spaces of ostensibly former colonial experiments" (Gonzalez, 2007: 54). Current US development assistance in the Philippines focuses on opening markets and relying on market-driven growth, similar to US economic endeavors during colonization. The similarity in economic approaches between these two time periods is not a coincidence, and this market-focus for current development projects is connected to the historical power imbalance between the US and the Philippines. In current development aid projects, the way that gendered violence plays out is not necessarily easily identifiable and may oftentimes be concealed under benevolent program language and project feedback. This thesis' USAID woman participant interviewees in fact had positive responses to the questions asked about the nature of the project they participated in. However, positive feedback such as this can be manipulated into proving project efficacy when, in reality, the project did not change structural problems in gender equality.

Lack of awareness of such structural inequalities can perpetuate gendered labour paradigms that conform to patriarchal views of women's roles (Parks, Christie and Bagares, 2015: 62), such as the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sustainable Agriculture and National Resource Management (SANREM). SANREM has been implemented in the Philippines since 1994. SANREM uses the gender dimensions framework (GDF) and livelihood framework to identify gender issues that are relevant to conservation agriculture (Ibid.: 62). GDF includes four overlapping categories: "(1) access and control over assets (tangible and intangible); (2) beliefs and perceptions; (3) practices and participation, and (4) laws, legal rights, and institutions," while "a livelihood framework considers people's assets, strategies, and outcomes to recognize and highlight all the components that contribute to a household's livelihood" (Ibid.: 62-3). Using these two frameworks, Parks, Christie and Bagares found that in the two villages Riza and Patrocenio, located in Claveria, the division of labour was gendered with men working mainly in the fields and women in the home. Furthermore, because men and women have different access to assets such as training and land, besides access to

assets, “agricultural practices, and soil knowledge and perception” are likewise gendered (Ibid.: 65-6).

Park, Christie and Bagares argue that “topography and farmer’s perceptions of strength are linked to gendered spaces, assets, and roles” (Ibid.: 69). In their interviews, “men seldom recognized women’s participation on the farm in the FGDs and interviews,” meanwhile, women name several responsibilities that they have on the farm: mainly weeding, but they also had direct and indirect roles in planting and harvesting (Ibid.: 67). Even the work that women do on the farm is “linked to a gendered-decision making dynamic” (Ibid.: 67).

Men are responsible for ‘heavy work,’ such as land preparation work (plowing, furrowing, and harrowing), because as the farmers reported in the interviews, ‘men are stronger than women.’ They also work more on sloping land because it is more dangerous than flat land, which is reserved for women’s work: flat land is easier to work on and if women work on sloped land, it will presumably take them more time to complete the job. Mens’ and women’s gendered division of labour even influenced their understanding of soil quality. For conservation agriculture programs to be effective, they “need to be aware of [these] multiple and gendered knowledge and perceptions of soil in a specific site, how project activities may impact gendered livelihoods, and how these in turn may impact the adoption of CAPS (conservation agriculture production system)” (Ibid.: 75).

US power-knowledge formations from their colonial rule of the Philippines set the stage for current capitalist and liberal structures which influence the kinds of agricultural development aid that Philippine women receive. Understanding not only the US colonial legacy in agricultural land policies and practices but also the cultural, racial, and gendered propaganda that the US used in their ‘education’ system that they enforced on the Philippines is also essential for this thesis’s endeavor. The strict, patriarchal, Anglo-Saxon cultural standards that the US colonial forces used (Lumba, 2015) laid the precedent for women’s rights regarding agricultural land ownership and gendered divisions of labor that exist in agricultural spaces to this day. Even though women can legally own land because of CARL, general attitudes do not favor or encourage their land ownership and certain qualifications make it challenging for women to own land. USAID projects such as SANREM continue to overlook gendered divisions of labor in agricultural spaces, where women are perceived as weaker than their husbands and are therefore

assigned ‘weaker’ responsibilities such as only working with certain produce, not working on land that is perceived to be ‘dangerous,’ and taking care of their children.

Even if gendered division of labor in the Philippines existed before US colonialism (Spain had previously colonized the Philippines before the US, another patriarchal state), structures that were and continue to be connected during colonialism and current US acts of imperialism, such as patriarchal values, capitalism, and trade/ market liberalism, depend on strict gendered divisions of labor that delineate certain roles to men and women based on their perceived qualities. US colonialism enforced these traditional notions, and current US development projects in the Philippines continue to mirror these paradigms, perpetuating gender roles that interfere and hinder Philippine women’s ability to be liberated from these very harmful systems and reach empowerment.

USAID Aims and Practices in the Philippines: Women and Agriculture:

To understand why current USAID programs cannot truly empower Philippine women, we need to examine the underlying values of USAID and their connection to the US’s colonization of the Philippines. It is crucial to connect US colonial paradigms to current USAID aims because their aims become the subsequent backbone of the secondary sources this thesis examines. The Philippines profile on the USAID website says the following under the ‘Economic Development and Governance’ tab:

The U.S. government partners with the government of the Philippines to address constraints to growth in the Philippines, largely by enhancing the country’s economic competitiveness. USAID facilitates trade and investment by reducing regulatory bottlenecks, entry barriers and discriminatory provisions to investment; improving the environment for competition; enhancing Philippine participation in regional and international trade agreements; and enabling financial inclusion (USAID).

According to the “Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Annual Performance Plan,” the United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development joint strategic goals for FY 2018-2022 include the following four goals:

1. Protect US security at home and abroad
2. Renew US competitive advantage for economic growth and job creation

3. Promote US leadership through balanced engagement
4. Ensure effectiveness and accountability for US taxpayers (USAID, 2021: 8)

The subgoals of the “renew US competitive advantage for economic growth and job creation” goal are as follows:

1. Promote US prosperity through advancing bilateral relations and “leveraging international institutions and agreements to open markets, secure commercial opportunities, and foster investment and innovation to contribute to US job creation.”
2. “Promote healthy, educated, and productive populations in partner countries to drive inclusive and sustainable development, open new markets, and support US prosperity and security objectives.”
3. “Advance US economic security by ensuring energy security, combating corruption, and promoting market-oriented economic and government reforms” (Ibid.: 8)

It should be noted that while such nationalistic rhetoric is oftentimes used to get approval from Congress, the language used in these subgoals can contradict with statements from the “2012 USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy,” such as “USAID’s effectiveness is directly related to its ability to recognize and address gender-related issues and constraints in order to produce lasting transformational development” (USAID, 2016: 1).

While the language used in the above goals and subgoals is used to maximize the chance of this document’s approval, it can also reveal rhetorical awareness, or why certain language was used for maximum persuasion of the intended audience and stakeholders. This thesis questions why such language is persuasive, when the language implemented “hews closely to American civilisation tropes of exceptionalism and exemplariness, even as its coerciveness is hidden from view” (Nair, 2013: 635). Such rhetoric can reveal that nationalistic-leaning language is more likely to be accepted than other, more benign, forms of communication, indicating that countries are concerned about their ability to pursue their own interests when helping others. This situation can reflect the contradictory and inconsistent relationship between US interests and strategies in the Indo-Pacific and the ability of USAID to provide aid that matches Philippine needs. Existing development theories have argued that development aid relies on and, in turn, perpetuates an unbalanced hierarchical relationship between aid donor and aid recipient: “no sense of equality

or partnership has yet existed, nor is it likely” (Richards, 1977: 647). This unbalanced relationship is due to the accumulation of capital in aid donors at the expense of the aid recipient. Due to the global capitalist system, aid donors need access to foreign markets to not only sell their surplus goods but also to take advantage of cheap raw resources and labour (Richards, 1997: 53-4).

If the language used in the above goals is understood as a reflection of what domestic government actors prefer in their implemented projects, then the first and second sub-goals (Ibid.: 8) in particular show that the US uses “particular understandings and applications of power, such as those that privilege the market ... in turn, hold unintended consequences for social change objectives...” and can leave “little space for the voices of differently positioned women to be heard, and thus little opportunity to incorporate women’s knowledge and experiences into more locally appropriate and potentially empowering livelihood enterprises” (Milgram, 2005: 344). The imperialist strategy of opening markets for domestic growth at the expense of the foreign country can be traced to the US colonization of the Philippines.

In 1898, the US bought the Philippines from Spain as part of their strategy to bring Asian markets closer to US’s capitalism and its commercial world (Lumba, 2015). US imperialist monetary strategies can continue to be traced to the 20th century, where the provisions of the Bell Act mandated a period of free trade between the Philippines and the US, required the Philippines to give equal treatment to investors, meaning that Americans could exploit Philippine resources essentially without restrictions (Landé, 2001, Merrill, 1993). These trade liberalization policies reflect the unequal relationship between aid donor and recipient: the US and the Philippines. The aid donor chooses the route of development for the aid partner, usually through trade with the donor country, taking away the aid partner’s agency and control over their own development process. Emphasizing the partner countries’ export sector causes limited internal markets, preventing the growth of a middle class and impeding economic development (Watson, 2013). Thus, the donor country creates an atmosphere of dependency, where the economy of the development aid recipient state relies on the former for economic stimulus (Richards, 1977: 59). US capitalism relies on the subjugation of less powerful economies.

Capitalism asserted by the US in the Philippines “ha[s] played a powerful and significant role in Philippine society historically,” causing “political instability and economic vulnerability, and continuing social inequality” (Kwiatkowski, 2005: 306-7). Policies aimed at development

such as trade liberalization and privatization of state enterprises have caused the destruction of local industries, damaged local agricultural production, reduced the amount of government financial support to social services, lead to an outflow of migrants looking for work in foreign countries, and rising unemployment rates domestically (Ibid.: 307).

Trade liberalization is a tool used in agricultural development aid to create markets for export goods. Liberal trade policies that open the market further subordinates women to patriarchal economic modes of production because they now have to work harder to compete with imported goods (Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002: 679). When women have to work longer hours to produce more goods, their already heavy workload increases. “The Fade-Away Effect: Findings from a Gender Assessment of Health Policies and Programs in the Philippines,” found that in Naga city, women and men both usually work 10 hours a day paid labor, but women work an additional 7 hour of unpaid labor back home (USAID, 2014). Because of underlying societal gendered divisions of labor, agriculture development projects that seek to increase women’s profit-generating ability compounds their already heavy burdens.

The second subgoal claims that promoting “healthy, educated, and productive populations (USAID, 2021),” is another priority of USAID/US Department of State mutual action. Productivity in a capitalist system “[creates] the consumer as *the* citizen. This citizen-consumer is made possible and legitimate through the cheap and often invisible labor of racialized, noncitizen, or lesser-citizen minorities” (Sa’ar, 2005: 685). Using the term ‘productive’ causes concern that USAID “educational and income generating projects, aim to give women ‘usable’ knowledge to make them “better tools of production,” and does not seek to “liberat[e] them from existing patriarchal and capitalist paradigms (Meena 1984: 7). Focusing on making women ‘productive’ also assumes that “women... have been leading marginalised lives because they have mainly engaged in non-income generating activities, specifically unpaid domestic duties” (Meena 1984: 8). These projects further give women a double burden, making women not only participate in paid labor but also in unpaid labor at home due to gendered divisions of responsibilities (Kothari, 2002).

The assumption that this neoliberal approach will help poor women become ‘productive,’ leading to an increase in income, displays the “bias of the Northern development paradigm [which] prioritiz[es] institutional sustainability [and] does not adequately focus on the viability of, and protective strategies for, the often-vulnerable small enterprises that it sponsors”

(Milgram, 2005). USAID projects directed at marginalized Filipino women will continue to fail to empower them as long as these projects insist on implementing neoliberal economic strategies and only focus on making women 'productive' members of the economy.

In short, USAID claims on its website and in the "Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Annual Performance Plan" show the contradiction between internal statements to pursue US strategies, open up new routes for trade, create productive populations, and feminist goals to "recognize and address gender-related issues and constraints in order to produce lasting transformational development" (USAID, 2016: 1). Structures and understandings of power that the US depend on to uphold their hegemonic status in the global hierarchy "leave little space for the voices of differently positioned women to be heard," causing the concerns of marginalized women to be concealed and ignored, likewise rendering the power structures that marginalize these women invisible (Milgram, 2005: 344). Because postcolonial feminism aims to highlight the voices of Third World Women, their goals inherently clash with USAID aims of pursuing US strategies and implementing liberal economic 'reform.'

The interviews this thesis conducted with Worker B, Participant A and Participant B show that the "Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives" was aware of gender inequality issues in agriculture, and implemented leadership training for women. The trainers were likewise trained by the LRO (Local Resource Organization) to conduct such leadership training for women. The purpose of the "Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives" project is to help build small farmer cooperatives by connecting them with larger more established ones to help build their capacity by providing training, advisory services, and learning exchange opportunities. This project's goal is to contribute in improving the socio-economic conditions of women and men farmers and their communities and to expand rural livelihood opportunities.

Worker B concludes that these goals were met as per determined indicators. Worker B also notes that women are now present in the farmer cooperatives' board, and that women became leaders within the separate farmers' groups. Even though women's household standing was not measured in this project, Worker B hopes that they will likewise become more respected and viewed as leaders in the home.

Two of the "Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives" women participants, Participant A and Participant B, both had similar responses to the interview

questions. Both women are members of the Canfabi Integrated Farmers' Association (CANIFA), and both joined the “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” project to gain leadership experience. Participant A sought to be empowered as a woman and to become a good leader, while Participant B also hoped to learn how to become a good leader. Both women felt empowered by the program, with Participant A specifically citing how the project helps her feel economically empowered. Both women would improve the program by sharing the knowledge they learned with other farmers. This thesis assumes that they mean they would improve the program by including more farmer participants and growing their outreach to other farmers in the community.

Both Participant A and Participant B said that the GROW Coop project increased their responsibilities, but based on the context of their response, I think that they misinterpreted my question: I think that they understood responsibilities as in the project helped them become more responsible instead of how I meant responsibilities, as in daily responsibilities/chores in the household or on the farm. Worker B states that the GROW Coop project did not offer related services such as child-care, and so even though Participant A says that her and her husband already share farm chores, she does not elaborate on if she has more chores than her husband and if these chores abide by gender roles, for example, if she is the sole caretaker of the children, etc. However, based on Participant A’s and Participant B’s responses, they felt economically empowered by the project and both women stated that they would apply what they learned even after the project ended.

It should be noted that while these women feel economically empowered through the project, Worker B noted that any change in their household standing had not yet been captured. While these two women do state that they felt more economically empowered through the GROW Coop project, there is a fine line between economic empowerment and making women productive members of their national economy while failing to provide adequate resources such as child-care to help mitigate women’s responsibilities. Based on the interviewee responses, it is unclear whether Participant A’s and Participant B’s burdens increased. However, since Worker B states that the project participants were overwhelmed with the training, GROW Coop did not offer related services, and given arguments from the literature review, this thesis assumes that this project did increase their responsibilities and burdens.

If development projects are to alleviate women's burden, then not only do women need to be provided various support systems, such as child-care and pre/post-partum services (Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002: 679), but men also need to be involved in promoting gender equality projects and in training programs. "The Philippine Cold Chain project", BAWP, and this thesis' interviewee responses show that not adequately training both men and women (in more equal proportions) in these projects may lead to the continuation of gender roles after the training program is finished. When asked if project implementers were trained in gender awareness, Worker B said:

One of the interventions to the GOACs is Female Leadership Training. Facilitators of the training are coming from the LRO (Local Resource Organization) who underwent Training of Trainers [ToT]. Agriterria Philippines conducted the ToT and we rolled-out the training.

Worker B did not answer what was the gender breakdown of the project workers (they most likely accidentally overlooked the question), but regarding the gender proportion of trainees, Worker B stated that the majority of people trained were women, with only about 35-40% men participants.

Incorporating gender sensitivity training for the project participants, and likewise training the trainers in gender inequalities corresponds with the "2012 USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy," which states "unequivocally that USAID's effectiveness is directly related to its ability to recognize and address gender-related issues and constraints in order to produce lasting transformational development" (USAID, 2016: 1). This project's Gender awareness training also follows proposed recommendations from the "Report on Gender Analysis Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop: Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Project," specifically the "Strengthen skills of program implementers through basic gender sensitivity training and sectoral training on gender responsive investment programming" recommendation (USAID, 2016), it is still concerning that less than half of people trained in the GROW Coop project were men. Worker B also states that the GROW Coop project had led to more women representation in the organization's board and that within the farmer's group, there are also now women leaders, but does not mention how many or the percentage.

Participant A and Participant B likewise state that they will apply what they have learned after “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” is completed. However, findings from BAWP and “The Philippine Cold Chain Project” show that men are more likely than women to be able to apply knowledge learned from the training programs to real life agricultural practices.

The BAWP Climate Field School conducted a series of lectures and “hands-on exercises in the field” for a whole cropping cycle, providing the farmers with agriculture and water management practices and technologies and local climate information to “enhance their capacity in planning and decision making to improve farming practices” (USAID, 2020). For each municipality of Buhi, Nabua, and Polangui, overall, more women farmers were trained than men within the two time periods 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. Only from 2013-2014 in Nabua where more men (33) trained than women (21). Even though, overall, more women were trained in the Climate Field School, more men were able to adopt the climate risk management strategies for agriculture that was taught. The only exception is the municipality of Polangui, where from 2015-2015 and from 2016-2017, more women adopted these strategies than men (55 women versus 38 men from 2015-2016 and 46 women versus 45 men from 2016-2017).

In the “Baseline Study Report: Philippine Cold Chain Project” agriculture training program, even though women were involved in training, the training programs also did not change the gendered division of labor between men and women in different agricultural responsibilities:

Vegetable production is still an area dominated by males. However, an increasing number of women are now involved in backyard vegetable production. Of special interest is the number of widows in a vegetable association in Bislig. These widows have resorted to backyard vegetable production to support their families. Women are primarily involved in the retail and trading of fruits and vegetables. In fact, most of the retailers and traders interviewed were women. (Balay Mindanaw, et. al., 2013: 48).

Furthermore, “mostly women, take on support or administrative functions” (Balay Mindanaw, et. al., 2013: 105). While women were targeted during the trainings, men and women still follow gendered roles in agricultural responsibilities.

From 2012-2017, BAWP also trained a majority of women, but when it came to applying the project knowledge to real life agricultural practices, men once again outnumbered women. The data from BAWP shows that even though women's equal representation in training activities is important, USAID projects must also consider the feasibility of men and women applying the gender sensitivity training in their real lives and the reality of gendered divided labor back in their home. It is essential for USAID programs to challenge gender roles and ensure that women are given the ability to put to use their training because gendered divisions of labour and gendered modes of production ignores the interdependence between these two realms and the ways in which they together impact women's lives (Missing Women in Agriculture Reforms, 2002: 679). Gender roles are linked to gendered spaces and assets, and depend on the "farmer's (man) perceptions of strength," therefore, "men seldom recognized women's participation on the farm" because women are 'weak' and thus it is assumed they do not contribute as much as men (Park, Christie and Bagares, 2015: 67).

If women are perceived to be weaker than men and are assigned certain, possibly less important, roles because of this "gendered-decision making dynamic" (Ibid.: 67), then women will be excluded from important decision making spaces, their pre-existing contributions will not be valued or regarded as equal to men's contributions, and the tools that women learned through USAID training programs will not be effectively implemented to their agricultural work. Not only do men need to be included in gender awareness training, but there also needs to be monitoring in place to ensure that they abide by what they learned after program implementation. Awareness is not enough to ensure non-discrimination and that the project has real, positive impacts on women (USAID, 2020). For USAID agriculture programs to be effective, they "need to be aware of [these] multiple and gendered knowledge and perceptions ... how project activities may impact gendered livelihoods, and how these in turn may impact the [program]" (Park, Christie and Bagares, 2015: 75).

The "Water Security Under Climate Risks: A Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Agriculture Sector (Bicol Agri-Water Project): Final Report 2012-2017" further states that "more women farmers attended the school, not just for the knowledge and skills but also as an opportunity to socialize. In the school, females were able to show off their fashionable selves which was good for their morale" (USAID, 2020: 13). This statement is incredibly reductive to women and showcases the double standard between men and women: men are seen

as participating for the sake of knowledge whereas women participate in these projects for the social agenda of showcasing their fashion, and the pursuit of knowledge is secondary to this agenda. The BAWP evaluation report was published in 2020, and shows how alive and well sexism is in USAID agencies.

BAWP's sexist statement in its final report is incredibly concerning and highlights the importance of training aid workers of their privilege coming from USAID and their own biases when working with aid partner project participants. As this sexist comment shows, if aid workers are not trained and made aware of the unbalanced power dynamic between themselves and the aid participants, it can result "in ambiguous impacts on both women participants' and the community's empowerment" (Kwiatkowski, 2005: 313). How can a development agency that has internalized sexism "recognize and address gender-related issues and constraints in order to produce lasting transformational development" (USAID, 2016: 1) when recognizing and addressing gender inequality is the bare minimum? If USAID personnel want to seek 'transformational development,' then gender inequality is only a facet of the multitudes of oppression and inequalities that they must address.

Consequences of USAID Agriculture Projects on Philippine Women's Empowerment

The interview responses express the positive impacts of the GROW Coop USAID funded project on two of the women participants. Since USAID works with Agriterra Philippines and Agriterra Philippines works with GROW Coop, Worker B could not answer the question of whether USAID caused any roadblocks in the GROW Coop project since USAID is not directly involved in GROW Coop. The two women interviewed both felt like the program empowered them economically and helped them gain responsibility. However, since GROW Coop did not offer related services, and given arguments from the literature review and data from the secondary sources, this thesis assumes that this project did increase their responsibilities.

However, it would be wrong of this thesis to conclude that these two women were not actually empowered because it would be problematic to say that their experiences participating in the development project are 'incorrect,' and reductive of postcolonial feminist goals if the narratives of Third World Women are concealed because their responses do not fit in neatly with this thesis' argument that USAID programs are unable to truly empower and liberate women.

This thesis instead argues that while it is possible for USAID agriculture development projects to make individual Philippine women feel empowered, their projects do not challenge and, in some cases, perpetuate patriarchal paradigms, such as capitalism and imperialism, that marginalize Third World Women. Feminist pursuits that only focus on ‘gender-related’ issues without looking at the multiple facets of oppression women face is western feminism, which “focus[es] their struggle exclusively on gender discrimination while eschewing other forms of struggle, notably ethnic struggles in gender-mixed settings” (Sa’ar, 2005: 686). Assuming that women only face oppression because of their gender identity constructs women as a singular, monolithic entity, and ignores the variations of a women’s identity (Mohanty, 1984).

Concepts of gender, ethnicity, and class are interconnected and mutually informing (Sa’ar, 2005). Capitalism creates “the consumer as *the* citizen. This citizen-consumer is made possible and legitimate through the cheap and often invisible labor of racialized, noncitizen, or lesser-citizen minorities” (Ibid.: 685). Economic globalization and imperial structures and narratives are interconnected to the gendering and racializing of labor. These structures articulate who a Third World Woman is: “there is no a prior Third World woman: such women are discursively produced by recent Western feminism in a manner reminiscent of colonial practices,” homogenizing Third World Women before they even enter western development spaces (Mohanty, 1984: 68).

The concept of a homogenous group of Third World Women would not exist if the west did not delineate women from the Third World as such. Western oppressive systems thus view and place Third World Women as ‘less-than’ and the ‘other,’ a group of people whose exploitation under capitalism is of little concern to US strategies. The global hierarchy, the same global hierarchy that gives more power to nations that are better at accumulating capital, perpetuates this placement because capital must be accumulated even at the expense of Third World Women. This is because the global hierarchy was derived through a colonial power-knowledge nexus that prioritized the accumulation of capital at the expense of poorer, previously colonized Third World countries (Nair, 2013: 631). Before Philippine women are even personally involved in USAID projects, they already have a clearly delineated identity and purpose in relation to US strategies.

Feminism that includes the voices of Third World Women centers the importance of representation. Representation can have two meanings, both of which are crucial to postcolonial

feminist commentary: the “first refers to representation as the constitution of or production of the subjects and objects of intervention, and the second refers to representation as speaking for or on behalf of marginalized or subaltern subjects” (Asher, 2017: 517). First, let’s look at the first aspect of representation, “representation as the constitution of or production of the subjects and objects of intervention” (Ibid.: 517). The BAWP final report from 2012-2017 found that in all three municipalities, Buhi, Nabua, and Polangui, women’s representation fell to less than half at the sub-watershed level because the participants are chosen by key officials of the sub-watershed councils who are mostly men. From 2013 to 2014, women representation targets were likewise unable to be met also because key officials were men (USAID, 2020: 31). The “Report on Gender Analysis Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop: Strengthening Urban Resilience for Growth with Equity (SURGE) Project” (USAID 2016) likewise points to lack of women’s representation and meaningful participation in decision making processes as a road-block to gender equality.

Physical representation is an important aspect for women’s empowerment, however, as can be seen through the BAWP and US Oceans and Fisheries projects, equal representation in training programs is not enough to enact change in real life practices. Perhaps this is because Philippine women were not included in the decision making process for what specific problems the development programs should address. Dreher, Gehring, and Klasen (2015) view women’s empowerment as political representation and representation in higher decision making positions. However, representation as a reliable indicator of empowerment is further problematized if we consider how it is dependent on the relationship between dominant forms of power and those it subjugates, “the west and the rest”, western philosophy/ science and Indigenous knowledge, and how these relations are interpreted and carried out by the dominant (read: western) power (Asher, 2017: 517-8). So what other aspects of empowerment are necessary for women’s collective liberation?

The second dimension of representation concerns issues of voice. Postcolonial feminism connects postcolonial paradigms with feminism by focusing on the voices of subaltern, or marginalized, Third World women and their oppression under globalized capitalism and liberalism (Mohanty, 1984, Sylvester, 1999, Sa’ar, 2005). Understandings and applications of capitalism and liberalism “are built into the rules and practices of social institutions,” leaving “little space for the voices of differently positioned women to be heard, and thus little

opportunity to incorporate women's knowledge and experiences into more locally appropriate and potentially empowering livelihood enterprises" (Milgram, 2005: 344). Aid agencies also have a tendency to ask as the 'voice' of supposedly 'voiceless' groups, assuming the power to act as 'authentic' representatives of the project participants, otherwise known as the marginalized (Nair, 2013: 646).

Since I was not there to conduct the interviews in person, this thesis cannot comment on if Participant A and Participant B felt comfortable speaking their mind on the "Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives" project. Since they were interviewed by one of the project implementers, Worker B, their responses should be analyzed with some amount of caution given the possibility that Participant A's and B's responses were influenced, subconsciously or otherwise, by their interviewer's position as being involved in the project's implementation. If future similar investigations are to take place, this thesis suggests that participants should be interviewed by the researcher or by a third party who is not involved in the project under investigation so as to minimize bias.

Milgram argues that there are three dimensions of power: "individual control over rights, resources, other people and one's personal position" (Milgram, 2005: 345). These three dimensions reflect the primary concepts of "power to," 'power over' and 'power within'" (Kabeer 1994: 223-228). Using these concepts in relation to Philippine women, 'power to' can mean the right to own certain things such as property; 'power over' can mean the right to be independently responsible for one's own finances; and 'power within,' the most abstract and hardest to define concept, could mean that Philippine women have some capacity to make their own life choices. These three dimensions can likewise be seen in the gender dimensions framework (GDF) and livelihood framework. The GDF includes four overlapping categories: "(1) access and control over assets (tangible and intangible); (2) beliefs and perceptions; (3) practices and participation, and (4) laws, legal rights, and institutions," while "a livelihood framework considers people's assets, strategies, and outcomes to recognize and highlight all the components that contribute to a household's livelihood" (Parks, Christie and Bagares, 2015: 62-3).

The GDF parallels 'power to' in "(2) beliefs and perceptions" and "(4) laws, legal rights, and institutions;" 'power over' in "(1) access and control over assets (tangible and intangible)" and the livelihood framework; and 'power within' in "(1) access and control over assets (tangible

and intangible)” and “(2) beliefs and perceptions” (Ibid.: 62-3). Philippine women’s ability to realize these three dimensions of power hits many roadblocks, such as sexist attitudes towards women land ownership, even though they have been legally allowed to own land since 1988. These sexist attitudes can be further seen in gendered divisions of agricultural labor, where perceptions of women’s ‘weaknesses’ dictate the responsibilities that they are allowed to have, such as child-care. USAID projects, such as SANREM, “The Philippine Cold Chain Project,” and BAWP, do not adequately address gender roles, resulting in the exclusion of Philippine women in important decision making positions such as sub-watershed level key official positions, not being able to apply their training from USAID programs in real life, and compounds the burden women carry since their involvement in income-generating opportunities means that they now have these new responsibilities in addition to taking care of their children.

The GDF only concerns itself with struggles that women face, however Philippine women do not simply have the sole identity of ‘woman,’ they also have various other racial, ethnic, and religious identities. The postcolonial side of postcolonial feminism studies the origins of imperialism and its relationship with racism and how these structures are diffused throughout history (Sylvester, 1999). Philippine women are Third World Women, and Third World Women experience oppression not just as women, but as women of color from the Third World. Capitalism and patriarchal values not only subjugate certain groups because of their gender, but also because of their racial and ethnic identity.

Even though this thesis’ interviewee responses and secondary sources do not necessarily show that USAID project implementers were racist towards the project participants, the very nature of imperialist and capitalist strategies that construct certain understandings of gender are connected to colonial understandings of race. US administrators justified their brutal colonization of the Philippines and their violent treatment of the locals using a racial hierarchy that prioritized white people while viewing people of color as inferior and subhuman (Lumba, 2015). Furthermore, “US empire in the Philippines was not strictly for the narrow benefit of US capital or the Anglo-American race, but simultaneously necessary for the development and growth of all capitalism and human civilization” (Lumba, 2015: 615-6). Racism and capitalism are thus inherently linked, and Philippine women experience marginalization from the global system capitalism created and is a part of not only because of their gender but also because of their racial

identity. As racism and capitalism are linked, struggles against capitalism and racism are likewise interconnected.

In postcolonial feminist spaces it is essential to question how current liberation struggles are linked to past anticapitalist, antiracist, and feminist struggles (Asher, 2017: 516). Feminist pursuits that only focus on 'gender-related' issues without looking at the multiple facets of oppression women face is western feminism, which "focus[es] their struggle exclusively on gender discrimination while eschewing other forms of struggle, notably ethnic struggles in gender-mixed settings" (Sa'ar, 2005: 686). Assuming that women only face oppression from their gender identity constructs women as a singular, monolithic entity, ignoring the variations a woman's identity may have (Mohanty, 1984). Because USAID fails to adequately recognize that race, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. are all interconnected and inequalities in each aspect must therefore be addressed synchronously, they perpetuate an exclusionary form of feminism that whitewashes the violence that Third World Women face (Sa'ar, 2005: 685). USAID's claims on its website and in the annual performance plan helps to further problematize some of the interviewee responses and findings from the secondary sources.

This thesis acknowledges that overturning systemic oppression is no easy task that can be done overnight, however, if USAID truly wishes to implement development programs that are sustainable and are in line with SDGs 5 and 10, which tackle gender inequality and reducing inequalities respectfully, then the first step is acknowledging that the past and current projects that rely on neoliberal understandings of development are unsustainable and further Philippine women's marginalization. However, this thesis is wary of making recommendations for improvement for USAID because radical postcolonial feminist actions, when institutionalized, can "build and contribute to, even as it reconstructs, the governing discourses and practices" (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010: 181).

Even when women work to make development projects more inclusive, they are simultaneously "enacting ruling practices and discourses. Their struggles thus both form and are formed within the matrices of the development institution that they are, through their own efforts, bringing into being" (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010: 181-2). Even the SDGs are part of the "ruling discourse" that defines the concept of 'effectiveness' for aid projects (Ibid.: 184-5). Dictating the meaning of 'effectiveness' and other "efforts to rationalize and evaluate development assistance are themselves the product of a huge knowledge industry, inseparable

from governance efforts that some analysts see stretching from the colonial era” (Ibid.: 185). If SDGs themselves are part of normative knowledge-power formations, then are they truly capable of addressing gender inequality and the multifaceted forms of inequalities that women may face?

Radical postcolonial feminist projects need to be implemented to truly address the different forms of oppression Third World Women face. However, because advocates must align women’s interests with that of the foreign aid project, they may have to forgo more radical empowerment efforts to “act in line with [foreign aid] ruling discourses” (Ibid.: 195). Supporters of more radical liberation efforts are likewise “excluded from the decision-making process” since they are actively contesting and resisting normative initiatives (Milgram, 2005: 344). Women thus become not just an object of ruling discourses but also its subject, perpetuating regulations that are not “of their own choosing or making” (Ibid.: 196-8). Even though this can subvert women’s original empowerment efforts, Campbell and Teghtsoonian believe that “this sort of struggle is the only possible way to advance a women’s agenda” (Ibid.: 198). If postcolonial feminist agendas have to be deradicalized to be implemented by aid agencies, will they still be adequate enough to address women’s empowerment? Or will the watered down version only become part of the imperialist machine that it seeks to destroy? If only a few women are empowered, can a development agency claim to have an effective program? These are some questions that this thesis does not have the answer to, but are worth conducting further research on.

This thesis’ interview endeavor was challenging because only one organization representative responded to and was able to complete my interview request. In the future, it would be better to be physically present in the Philippines to interview the women in person so that there are not any misunderstandings, I can prompt them to give more elaborate and specific responses, and they feel free to speak their minds (if they cannot speak English, I would also need to hire a private translator). This thesis project lacked the resources to do so, but having the funding and opportunity to travel in person could lead to more fruitful results. However, this thesis believes that the interviewee responses, combined with the secondary sources, allows this thesis to draw conclusions on whether USAID agriculture development projects empower and liberate Philippine women.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis used a postcolonial feminist framework to analyze the impacts of US development aid on Philippine women in agriculture and if it is able to empower and liberate Philippine women from the structures and systems that marginalize them. To investigate this question, this thesis implemented a qualitative research method that relied on interviewee responses, a development project worker and two women participants, as well as secondary sources such as USAID project evaluation documents. Qualitative interview research methods are essential in postcolonial feminist studies because the goal of postcolonial feminism is to highlight and center the voices of marginalized women.

The interviewee responses combined with secondary sources offer insights into both the positives and shortcomings of USAID agricultural projects in the Philippines. The interviews were essential for this thesis in pursuing the postcolonial feminist goal of centering and giving space for marginalized women to voice their opinions on the development projects that impact their lives, and to highlight these narratives in development practices. The secondary sources, USAID Philippine project evaluations, assisted in analyzing the interviewee responses, and in some cases contradicted with what the interviewees stated. These secondary sources are likewise essential sources of information for investigating USAID project impacts and their ability to either empower women or to further compound their marginalization.

The interviews this thesis conducted with Worker B, Participant A and Participant B show that the “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” was aware of gender inequality issues in agriculture, and implemented leadership training for women. The trainers were likewise trained by the LRO (Local Resource Organization) to conduct such leadership training for women. The purpose of the “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” project is to help build small farmer cooperatives by connecting them with larger more established ones to help build their capacity by providing training, advisory services, and learning exchange opportunities. This project’s goal is to contribute in improving the socio-economic conditions of women and men farmers and their communities and to expand rural livelihood opportunities. Worker B concludes that these goals were met as per determined indicators. Worker B also notes that women are now present in the farmer cooperatives’ board, and that women became leaders within the separate farmers’ groups. Even though women’s

household standing was not measured in this project, Worker B hopes that they will likewise become more respected and viewed as leaders in the home.

Two of the “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” women participants, Participant A and Participant B, both had similar responses to the interview questions. Both women are members of the Canfabi Integrated Farmers' Association (CANIFA), and both joined the “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” project to gain leadership experience. Participant A sought to be empowered as a woman and to become a good leader, while Participant B also hoped to learn how to become a good leader. Both women felt empowered by the program, with Participant A specifically citing how the project helps her feel economically empowered.

Even though the responses from Worker B, Participant A and Participant B are generally positive, there are some contradictions in Worker B’s responses and Participant A and Participant B’s responses. Worker B notes that the project participants felt overwhelmed during their training, and that the “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” project did not offer relevant resources for the women participants, such as child-care or related healthcare services. Even though both women felt empowered, there are some contradictions between their responses and Worker B’s; for example: Worker B states that the project did not provide related services and support. However, it would be wrong of this thesis to conclude that these two women were not actually empowered. It would be incredibly problematic to say that their experiences in the development project are ‘incorrect’ and reductive to postcolonial feminist goals to subdue their voices.

Both women also state that the program expanded their responsibilities, though their responses implies a positive connotation of the word ‘responsibility,’ as in the program helped them become more responsible, whereas I meant ‘responsibility’ as in household duties. Participant B states that she and her husband share household and farm chores but does not offer further insight into how these chores are divided. Based on information on the unbalanced burden placed on women and the gendered division of labor between men and women in household and farm duties from the literature review, and because this project did not provide additional child-care services, this thesis concludes that Participant A and Participant B both face heavier burdens than their husbands, and that the “Generating Rural Opportunities by Working with Cooperatives” increased their household and farm responsibilities.

Content from the secondary literature investigated, “Baseline Study Report: Philippine Cold Chain Project,” “Performance Evaluation of USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership,” BAWP, and the “SURGE Participatory Gender Training and Gender Integration Validation Workshop,” contradicts the positive interviewee responses by highlighting the divisions and gaps between the number of men and women employed in agricultural labor, the gendered division of agricultural labor based on gender, and the number of men and women trained in agricultural education. Even though project stakeholders in USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership claim that their awareness of gender inequality issues had increased, they did not follow through on adequate actions to promote gender equality. The “Performance Evaluation of USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership” further notes that even though awareness of the importance of gender and human welfare had increased, there were little to no impacts on the lives of women and other marginalized populations.

Furthermore, in the BAWP training sessions, even though men and women were equally represented, after training sessions ended, women and men were more likely to fall back into their old labor habits and gendered divisions of labor, and women were less likely to be able to use what they learned in their training (USAID, 2018). BAWP also states that women not only participated in these trainings to gain agricultural knowledge and skills, but also as an opportunity to socialize and show off their fashion. This statement is incredibly reductive to women and showcases the double standard between men and women: men are seen as participating for the sake of knowledge whereas women participate in these projects for the social agenda of showcasing their fashion. The BAWP evaluation report was published in 2020 and shows how alive and well sexism is in USAID agencies.

This sexist comment brings us back to the patriarchal nature of USAID development paradigms. The very concept of foreign aid, where the US has the resources necessary to designate them as the ‘giver,’ while the other country lacks such resources and thus becomes the ‘recipient,’ defines a specific global hierarchy based on who can accumulate the most capital using the cheapest labor at the expense of others, usually Third World Women. Western understandings of development aid perpetuate neoliberal and capitalist understanding of development, either ignoring women’s informal contributions to the economy or actively harming them through implementing policies that only aim to make them active, participating

members of the economy without providing necessary related services, such as child-care, and without addressing oppressive pre-existing economic, political, and social matrices.

These western understandings permeate how we think about solving issues of gender inequality, and can even influence who we deem deserves help and who doesn't; whose life has value and in what circumstances does it have value; who deserves resources and who doesn't; how can we make those deserving of resources fit our needs; etc. At the end of the day, the US will continue to partake in foreign aid actions that suit their needs and their strategies, even if these actions and strategies compound the oppression that women face.

The history of US colonialism in the Philippines and its continuum through imperialist and neoliberal open market policies necessitated using a postcolonial feminist framework for questioning the impacts of US foreign aid are on women in agriculture. A postcolonial feminist framework was further needed because the concerns of postcolonial feminist scholars has not been taken into serious consideration by mainstream development paradigms and agencies (Kothari, 2002), overlooking the interconnectedness and intersectionality between gender, race, and imperialism. Because these concerns have not been taken seriously, there is a current lack of postcolonial feminist theorization and application to real life development practices, so this research hopefully added to current actions focused on minimizing this gap in sustainable development project implementation and planning. This thesis strove to highlight the necessity of recognizing Third World Women's identity intersectionality and call into question orthodox development practice and assumed knowledge, which has been shaped by and reflects Western and patriarchal paradigms, the very paradigms that initiated and justified colonial endeavours (Kothari, 2002).

This thesis also contributed to postcolonial feminist pursuits of challenging mainstream and hegemonic understandings of development aid by critiquing USAID agricultural intervention in the Philippines and showing how these interventions do not truly empower or liberate women. USAID projects can change individual women's lives and have positive impacts on their individual livelihoods, but the overarching structures and systems that oppress women will continue to exist as long as USAID fails to directly address the very hegemonic global systems that allow the US to maintain their global power. Unless USAID addresses these internal structures and their concepts of development aid, which relies on and in turn perpetuates these

oppressive structures, their projects will continue to inadequately address the multifaceted concerns of Philippine women.

This thesis acknowledges that overturning systemic oppression is no easy task that can be done overnight, however, if USAID truly wishes to implement development programs that are sustainable and are in line with SDGs 5 and 10, which tackle gender inequality and reducing inequalities respectfully, then the first step is acknowledging that the past and current projects that rely on neoliberal understandings of development are unsustainable and further Philippine women's marginalization. Even though this thesis is wary of making recommendations for improvement for USAID because radical postcolonial feminist actions, when institutionalized, can "build and contribute to, even as it reconstructs, the governing discourses and practices" (Campbell and Teghtsoonian, 2010: 181), this thesis can give some ideas on how to approach women's empowerment.

Third World Women should not have to be productive members of the economy to have their value recognized by the foreign aid giver and by members of their own community and country. Third World Women should be given resources such as child-care and health care regardless if they are able to become part of the labor force and earn an income. Third World Women have value outside of a capitalist and neoliberal world order, and they do not need these institutions in order to be economically, politically, or socially empowered. Third World Women have a voice, and we need to listen to them if we are to fundamentally change the way we think about development aid.

We need to not only include Third World Women in development aid conversations, but ensure that women from various backgrounds are able to stand at the forefront of such projects and decision-making processes while also recognizing that women are not a monolithic group and that the women capable of being involved in these projects may not have the same interests as other women even within their own gender or racial group. Development aid workers need to be trained and tested in gender and racial awareness, their privilege (especially if they are coming from a pre-colonial power), and how the history of colonialism shaped modern day foreign aid relations. I also say tested because going through training alone is not an adequate indicator of a foreign worker's ability to recognize their privilege and be a conscientious and empathetic worker; a thorough examination and job observations are also needed.

USAID projects will be unable to empower or liberate women because the very foundation of the US's relationship with the Philippines originates from their brutal colonization (colonization cannot be anything but brutal) of the latter. The very global hierarchy that enabled the US to purchase an entire country and its people still exists to this day albeit in less explicit, imperialistic and capitalistic structures. However, these structures still carry very real modes of subjugation that colonialism thrived on. Gender inequality will continue to exist as capitalism and imperialism continue to exist, and 'sustainable development' will continue to be an unreachable concept as long as these paradigms go unchallenged.

Gender and racial inequalities must be addressed if development is to be considered 'sustainable.' Women contain multitudes of identities that intersect, and they face different forms of oppression based on the different dimensions of their identity. Sustainable development needs to address the various unequal matrices that impact women, and in order to do so, sustainable development efforts must also challenge and break down the global patriarchal capitalist system. If the US wants to seriously abide by the SDGs, and place special importance on the SDGs that target gender inequalities (SDGs 5 and 10) then their policies and project strategies must challenge capitalist and neoliberal ideologies to truly empower women and improve their lives.

Therefore, this thesis concludes that USAID projects that target Philippine women in agriculture can indeed increase women's representation in paid labor, in higher positions of authority in farming cooperatives, and can increase their household income. However, these benefits are not enough to change the larger economic and social matrices that marginalize Philippine women, including the very patriarchal institutions, such as capitalism and its related imperialistic structures, that form the backbone of USAID as a representative agency of the US.

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Appendix

Table 2 corresponding figure:

Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region (in pesos)

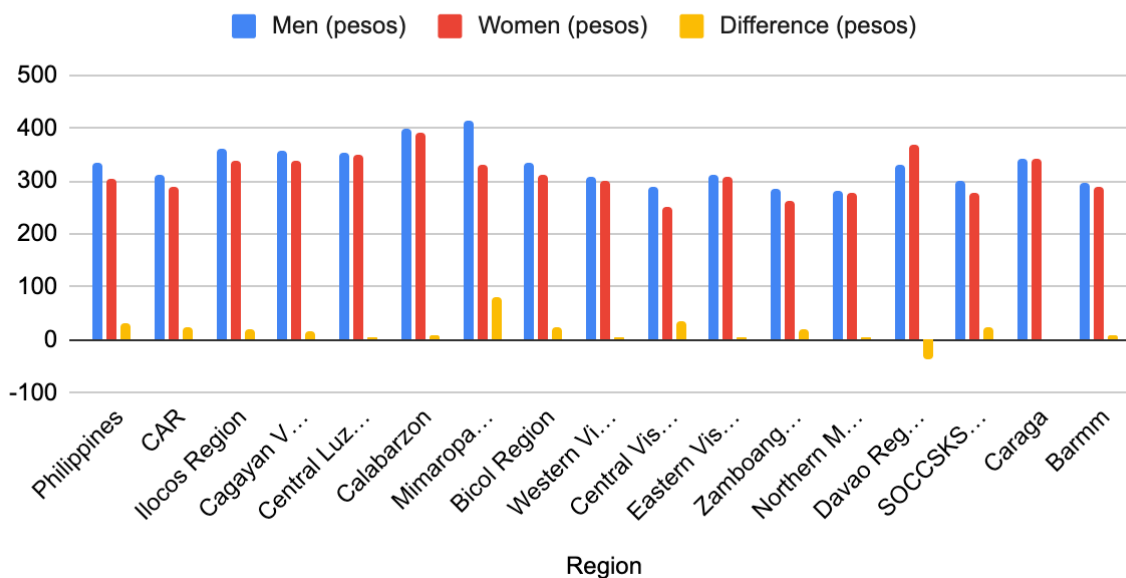


Table 4 corresponding figure:

Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Crop Type

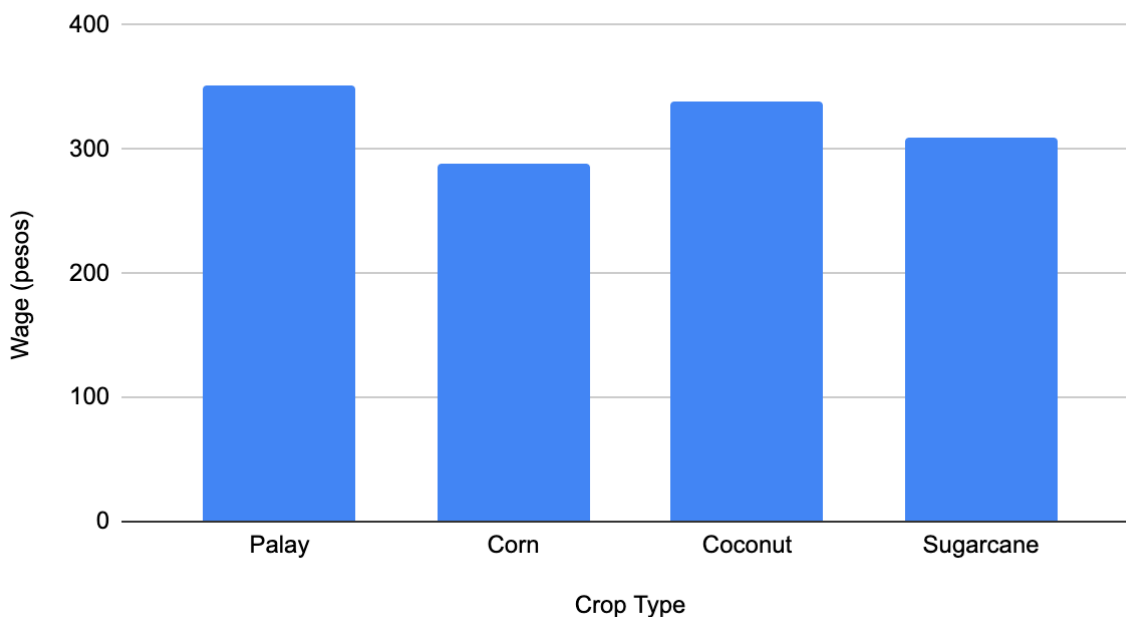


Table 5 corresponding figure:

Palay: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region (in pesos)

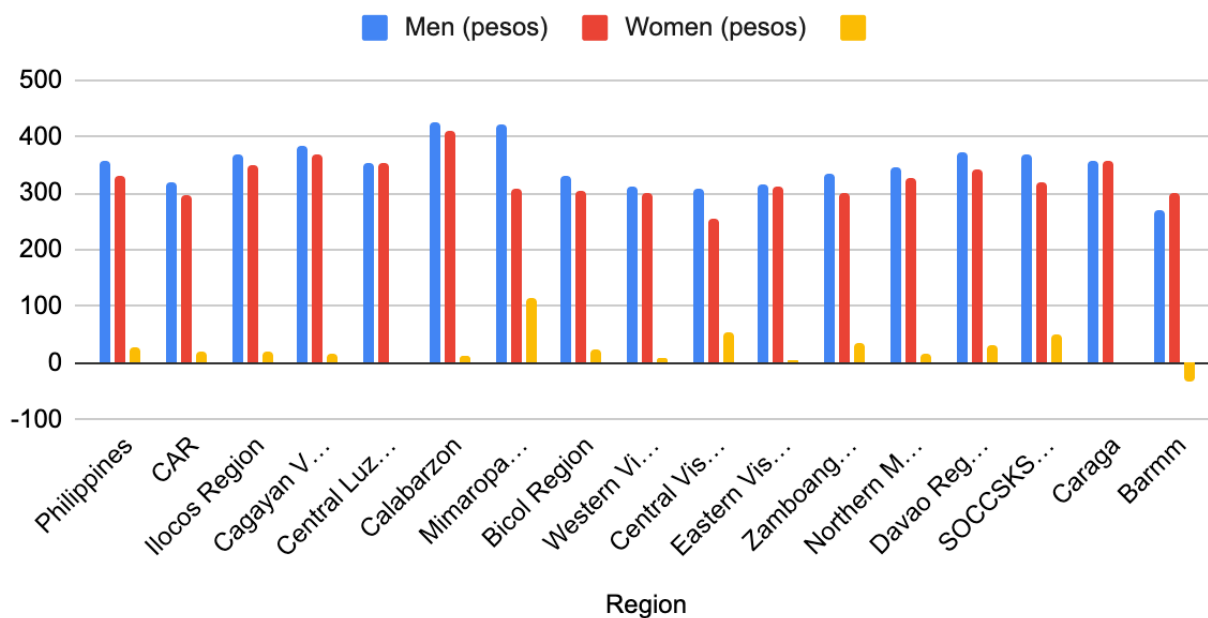


Table 6 corresponding figure:

Corn: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region (in pesos)

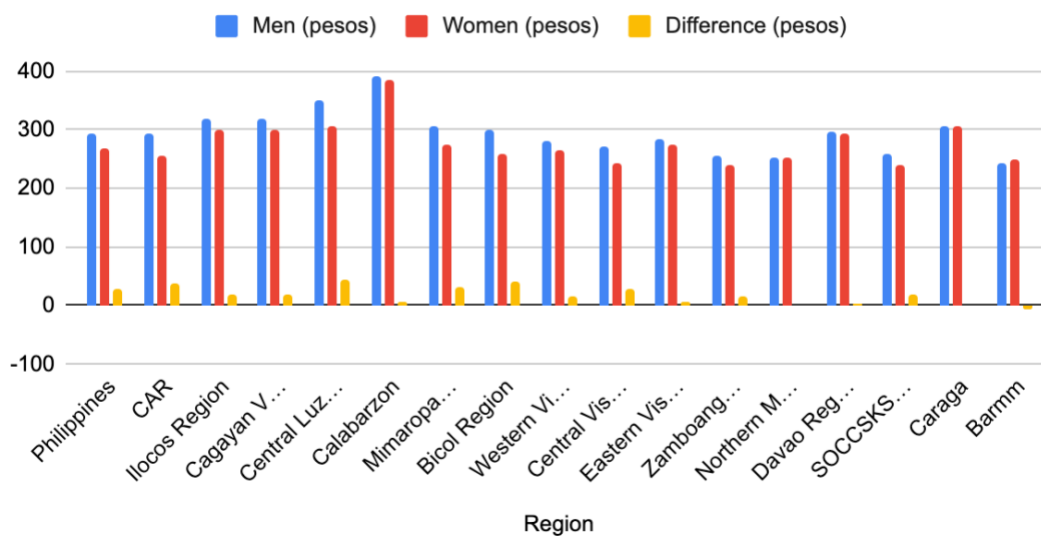


Table 7 corresponding figure:

Coconut: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region (in pesos)

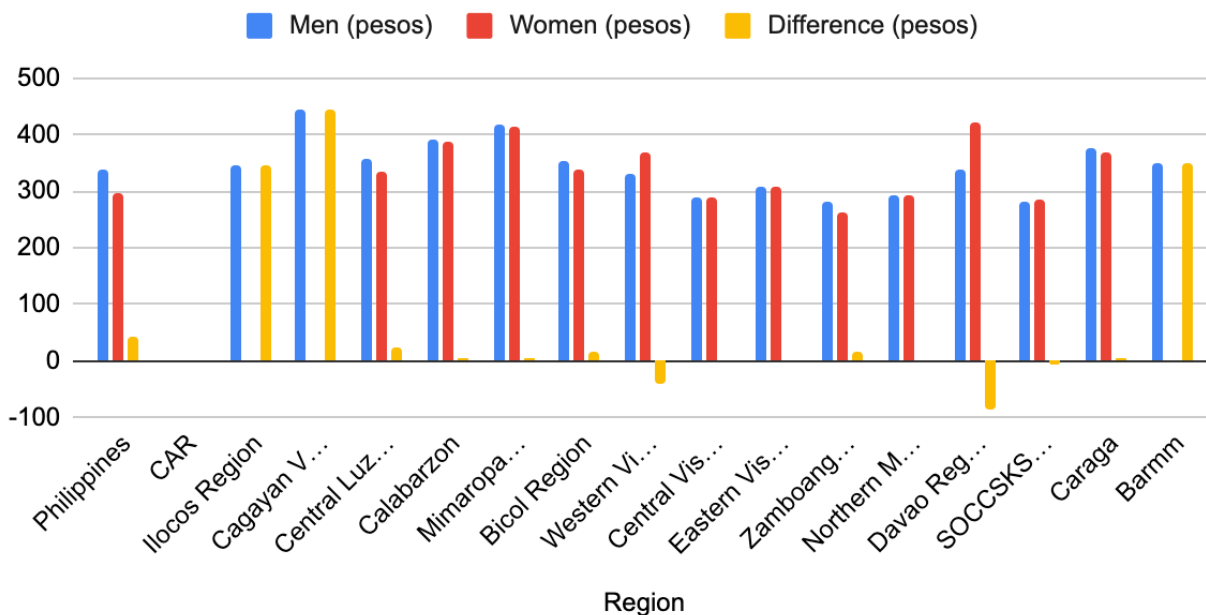
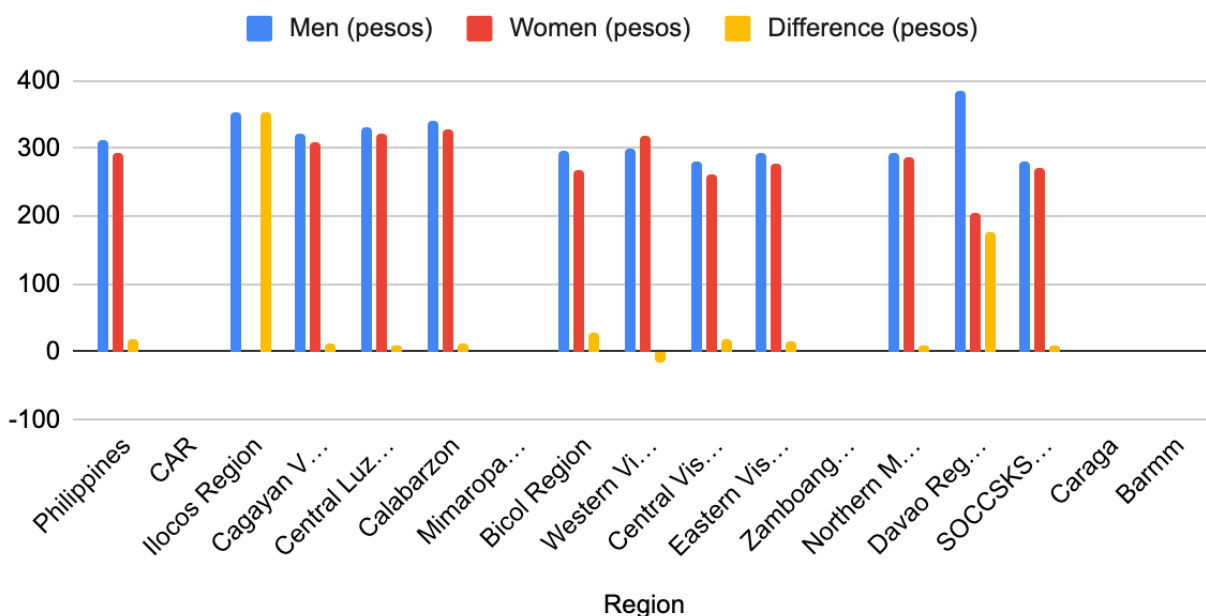


Table 8 corresponding figure:

Sugarcane: Daily Nominal Wage Rates of Farm Workers by Gender and Region (in pesos)



Organizations Contacted:

Organization	Type of Organization	Respond? Yes or No	Can they interview? Yes or No
Cordillera Studies Center UP Baguio	Educational	Yes- but not consistent	No
Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD)	CSO	No	N/a
AMIHAN National Federation of Peasant Women	CSO	No	N/a
Gabriela- National Alliance of Filipino Women	CSO	No	N/a
AMIHAN National Federation of Peasant Women	CSO	No	N/a
Benguet Province, Lengaoan Indigenous Farmers MultiPurpose Cooperative (LIFMPC)	CSO	No	N/a
Benguet, Tawangan Agrarian Reform Community Multipurpose Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
Benguet, Fresh Crops Agriculture Cooperative (FCAC)	CSO	No	N/a
Pangasinan Province, Western Pangasinan Seed Growers MultiPurpose Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
Cagayan Province, Bantay Farmers Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries' Cooperative, PH	CSO	Yes- but after a few emails no reply	N/a
Cagayan Province, San Juan Marketing Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
Occidental Mindoro Province, Family Arrange the Resources and Managed Multi-Purpose Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
Oriental Mindoro Province, Sta. Maria Agrarian Reform Community Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
Oriental Mindoro, Mansalay Agriculture and Fisheries Development Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN) Philippines	NGO	Yes	No- projects with USAID are about building institutional capacity in government

USAID Philippines (contact info on website)	IGO	No	N/a
Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (PPSA)	NGO	Yes- via Linkedin	N/a
Philippine Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)	Government Institution	No	N/a
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Agrarian Reform	Government Institution	No	N/a
USAID	IGO	No	N/a
Federation of Peoples' Sustainable Development Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a
Agriterra	NGO	Yes	Yes!
Fatima Vigan Multi-Purpose Cooperative	CSO	No	N/a

