

The Politics, Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle for a Genuine Land Reform in the Philippines

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University of Hohenheim, December 2006

Overview

- Introduction
 - Agrarian Reform in East Asian Countries
 - Philippines at a Snapshot
- The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines
- Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle
- Conclusion and Policy Suggestions



Source: www.ifad.org

Introduction

Agrarian Reform in East Asia

Japanese Agrarian Reform (1946-1949)

Objectives:

- To promote owner-cultivator and agrarian capitalism
- To undermine communist mobilization of the peasantry

Why a highly confiscatory and regulatory approach was possible?

- Tenant farmers had strong cooperativism and unionization
- Industrialist and middle class demanded such reform as a 'democratization' measure
- United States financial and military support

Land Redistribution

Political influence

Collective action

Education, Language, Culture

Moral sanctions against violation

Motivation

Introduction (cont)

Agrarian Reform in East Asia

Taiwanese Agrarian Reform (1949-1953)

Objective:

- To fight against communism

Why a highly confiscatory and regulatory approach was possible?

- United States financial and military support
- Government was alien to local landed elite's influence
- Tenants were highly organized and well-informed
- Efficient bureaucracy
- Accurate landownership and land use data

Land Redistribution

Political influence

Collective action

Education,
Language, Culture

Moral sanctions
against violation

Motivation

Introduction (cont)

Agriculture and Poverty in the Philippines

- Agriculture and fishery contribute 15% of the GDP in 2002 (National Statistic Office (NSO) 2005)
- Three quarters of the poor make a living from agricultural and fisheries activities
- Agricultural land area constitutes 32.2% of the country's total land area (NSO 2005)
- Average farm size is 2.0 hectares (NSO 2005)



Source: www.dar.gov.ph

Introduction (cont)

Areas in focus

Region VIII (Eastern Visayas)

Ormoc, Leyte

Baybay, Leyte

Inopacan, Leyte

Region X (Northern Mindanao)

Claveria, Misamis Occidental

Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Occidental

Sumilao, Bukidnon



Methodology

Criteria for Selection of Study Area

Total area accomplished by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)

Type of land and agricultural practices

Presence of contact persons

Region VIII (Eastern Visayas)

- High-performing in total area distributed by DAR
- 3 islands with higher slopes
- Major crops are rice and coconut

Region X (Northern Mindanao)

- Low-performing in total land area distributed by DAR
- Part of a big island (Mindanao)
- Vast land cultivated with exportable produces

Methodology (cont)

Collection of Data

Literature review

Archival analysis

- data reduction
- re-reading



Qualitative interview

- individual
- group

Key persons

- Agrarian reform beneficiaries
- Landless farmers
- Landowners
- Lawyers and legal advisers
- DAR officers, NGO officers
- Lawmakers/Congress

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines

Period	Highlights
Pre-colonial (before 1571)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ No concept of individual freehold private property of land (Putzel 1992)
Spanish (1571-1898)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Private land ownership was introduced.➤ Economic and political system where a relatively small group of landed elites enjoyed monopoly and power.➤ Peasant pressure for reforms were present but failed to regain their lands and trample the feudal system.
First Philippine Republic (1899-1901)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Malolos constitution authorized the President to alienate, transfer or exchange land. “Political will” was present but administration was short lived.

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines (cont)

Period	Highlights
American (1901-1935)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Dominant position of the landed oligarchy.➤ Philippine Bill 1902 (ceilings on private ownership)➤ Philippine Registration Act (RA) 1902 (comprehensive registration)➤ Increase percentage of tenants among the agricultural population (Putzel 1992).➤ Subdued peasants' resistance due to presence of United States military.
Commonwealth (1935-1946)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 'Social Justice' program➤ Land acquired and distributed was minuscule and land concentration accelerated.

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines (cont)

Period	Highlights
Japanese (1941-1945)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Peasants took up arms against Japanese➤ Landlords who supported the Japanese lost lands while those supported the anti-Japanese group earned fixed rentals (DAR 2006)➤ Rural reform focused on agrarian reform
Philippine Republic (1946-present)	<p><i>Roxas (1946-1948)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reactivation of peasant military movement demanding agrarian reform➤ RA 34 (70-30 sharing arrangement and share tenancy contracts)

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines (cont)

Period	Highlights
Philippine Republic (1946-present)	<p data-bbox="605 482 1062 531"><i>Quirino (1948-1953)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="605 554 1793 1082" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="605 554 1309 602">➤ No important legislation passed<li data-bbox="605 625 1603 1011" style="margin-left: 20px;">➤ Robert S. Hardie's report on tenancy rejected<ul data-bbox="643 688 1728 1011" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="643 688 1328 736">- abolishing absentee ownership<li data-bbox="643 759 1260 808">- low ceiling on land retention<li data-bbox="643 831 1622 879">- government purchase and distribution of land<li data-bbox="643 902 1728 951">- land price fixed and non-negotiable compensation<li data-bbox="643 973 1089 1022">- flexible amortization<li data-bbox="605 1039 1793 1082">➤ United States authorities did not support liberal reform

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines (cont)

Period	Highlights
Philippine Republic (1946-present)	<p data-bbox="605 482 1150 529"><i>Magsaysay (1953-1957)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="605 551 1785 872" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="605 551 1696 668">➤ Agriculture Tenancy Act 1954 (share tenancy and leasehold system)<li data-bbox="605 689 1785 806">➤ Land Reform Act of 1955 (Land tenure administration) - 300 has for individuals, 600 for corporations<li data-bbox="605 828 1683 872">➤ Budgetary constraints halted redistribution efforts <p data-bbox="605 965 1030 1012"><i>Garcia (1957-1961)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="605 1033 1747 1150" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="605 1033 1220 1078">➤ No new agrarian legislation<li data-bbox="605 1099 1747 1150">➤ 19 large estates and six smaller ones were acquired

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines (cont)

Period	Highlights
Philippine Republic (1946-present)	<p data-bbox="586 482 1125 529"><i>Macapagal (1961-1965)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="586 551 1772 805" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="586 551 1448 598">➤ Land Reform Code (200 amendments)<ul data-bbox="624 619 1753 805" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="624 619 1753 666">- abolished share tenancy, 75 hectares retention limit<li data-bbox="624 688 1582 735">- lands with permanent crops were exempted<li data-bbox="624 756 1772 805">- draft included a plan for progressive land tax but was <p data-bbox="586 896 1030 943"><i>Marcos (1965-1986)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="586 965 1696 1219" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="586 965 1163 1012">➤ Code of Agrarian Reform<ul data-bbox="624 1033 1487 1148" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="624 1033 1487 1080">- peasant pressure, congressional action<li data-bbox="624 1098 1340 1148">- reduced funding for the program<li data-bbox="586 1169 1696 1219">➤ Operation Land Transfer and Operation Leasehold

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines (cont)

Period	Highlights
Philippine Republic (1946-present)	<p data-bbox="605 486 1049 534"><i>Aquino (1986-1992)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="605 551 1744 782" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="605 551 1744 598">➤ Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP)<li data-bbox="643 611 1652 658">- 5 has retention limit + 3 has per legitimate heir<li data-bbox="643 671 1744 718">- 10 years implementation period in different phases<li data-bbox="643 731 1744 778">- comprehensive in coverage with some exemptions <p data-bbox="605 853 1043 901"><i>Ramos (1992-1998)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="605 918 1772 1149" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="605 918 1309 965">➤ Better implementation of CARP<li data-bbox="605 978 1547 1025">➤ Exemptions of fishponds and prawn ponds<li data-bbox="605 1038 1772 1149">➤ Provided 50 billion pesos for CARP and extension for another 10 years

The History and Politics of Land Reform in the Philippines (cont)

Period	Highlights
Philippine Republic (1946-present)	<p data-bbox="605 486 1058 532"><i>Estrada (1998-2000)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="605 554 1804 672" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="605 554 1804 672">➤ Consolidation of small farm operation into medium and large scale integrated enterprise <p data-bbox="605 761 1115 806"><i>Arroyo (2000-present)</i></p> <ul data-bbox="605 828 1229 946" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="605 828 896 873">➤ Budget cuts<li data-bbox="605 895 1229 941">➤ “Farmland as Collateral” bill

Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle

Agrarian Reform Models and Evasionary Mechanisms

Voluntary-Offer-to-Sell (VOS) scheme

- offers incentives to landlords when they voluntarily cooperate with the program
- Case 1: Garchitorena Land Scam

Voluntary Land Transfer (VLT) Scheme

- land transfer made directly between landlords and tenants
- Case 2: Danding Cojuangco Land Deal

Stock Distribution Option (SDO)

- landlords offer farmworkers capital stock of the company
- Case 3: Hacienda Luisita



Source: www.intal.be

“Don’t throw us out of Hacienda Luisita”

–Ambala/KMP

Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle

Agrarian Reform Models and Evasionary Mechanisms

Leaseback Arrangement

- land awarded to beneficiaries are put to a lease agreement with an investor
- Case 4: Del Monte Philippines

Leasehold Arrangements

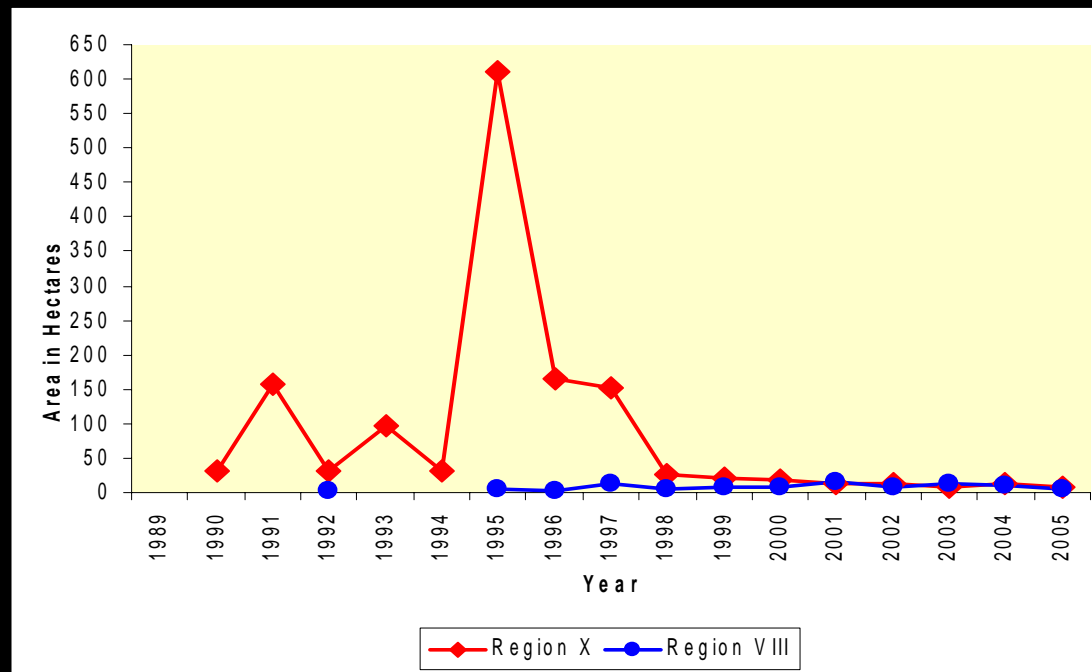
- non-transfer program that protects the tenure status
- Case 5: Balayan, Batangas



Source: www.googlephoto.com

Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle (cont)

Evasionary Mechanisms (cont)



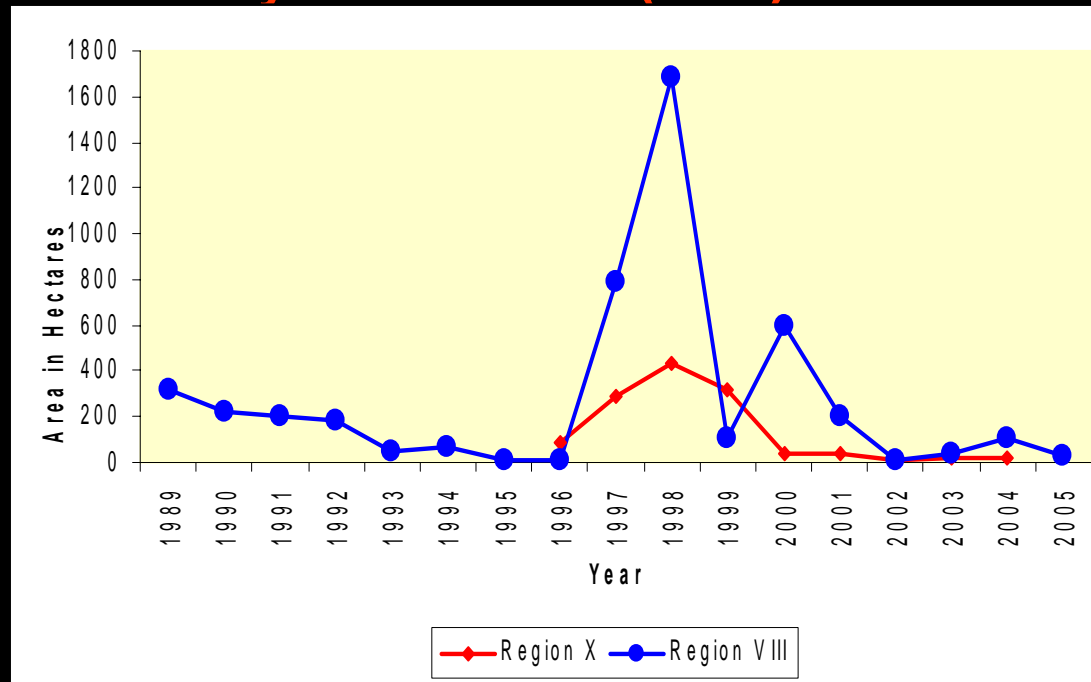
Sources: Milan 2006

Historical Trend of Land Conversion in Region X and Region VIII (1989-2005)

Source: DAR Region VIII and DAR Region X

Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle (cont)

Evasionary Mechanisms (cont)



Sources: Milan 2006

Historical Trend of Land Exemption and Exclusion in Region X and Region VIII (1989-2005) Source: DAR Region VIII and DAR Region X

Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle (cont)

Opinions from DAR Officers

- Modify land valuation formula
- Speed up land valuation and payment to landowners.
- Punishment for landowners with strong resistance and for farmer beneficiaries for selling cultivation rights/converting lands.
- Coordination with NGO's.
- Apprehensive on the "Farmland as Collateral" bill
- Mixed opinion on the planned merger of three institutions: DAR, DENR, and Department of Agriculture (DA).

Landowners' Resistance and Peasants' Struggle (cont)

Opinions from Landowners

- Sentimental value towards land
- Retention limit
- Lack in landownership data

Opinions from Farmers

- Landowners circumvent CARP by transferring title or selling their properties
- Supports the "Farmland as Collateral" bill



Source: www.googlephoto.com

Conclusions

- Periodic government policies on land reform to address serious peasant unrest.
- Political influence of proponents of land redistribution is low despite large number.
- Landlord's power and influence in legislature and executive branch is well-entrenched.
- Laws passed were limited in scope, plugged with loopholes and not backed with sufficient funds
- Provisions of CARP provided opportunities for landowners to evade the program.
- Agrarian reform will remain an important and economic issue.

Land Redistribution

Political influence

Collective action

Education, Language, Culture

Moral sanctions against violation

Motivation

Policy Suggestions

- Formulation of a Land Use Code
- Progressive Land Tax on landholdings beyond the retention limit
- Idle Land Tax Law
- Task force on illegal conversion
- Alternative to a 'Farmland as Bank Collateral' bill
- Land valuation formula
- Exclusions/exemptions of lands
- Data base management



Sources: www.peace.net.ph

Collective Action

Role of Non-Government
Organizations (NGOs) and
Peoples' Organizations

Collective Action for Strong
Political Will



Source: www.peace.net.ph

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Maraming Salamat! Thank you!



Sources: www.ifad.org