

## Appropriation and Re-appropriation of Lands since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century in Bohol, Philippines

三浦敦\*

Atsushi MIURA (Saitama University)

### 1. Introduction

The Philippines is known for its highly unequal income distribution, which is caused by unequal land distribution. This economic inequality results in political instability as well as peasant uprisings, even nowadays. In this communication, we will discuss the history of the land system in the Philippines with a special focus on the province of Bohol, and we will analyse the impact of agrarian policies on peasant life and the peasant reaction to governmental intervention.

The inequality of land distribution is said to have its origin in the Spanish colonization, which favoured *conquistadores* who established large *haciendas*. Even after independence, land accumulation developed, in spite of repeated implementation of agrarian reform programs. Local people responded to the imposition of land policies by re-appropriating the system, in the sense that they maintain the pre-colonial system of land and social relationship. Hence arise two questions. How do they react toward the policy of rural modernization? Why do peasant and landless people seek to preserve the pre-colonial system even though their life is surrounded by a market economy? The answers differ from one period to another.

The history of land reform in the Philippines can be broken down into four periods: the pre-colonial era,

\* みうら・あつし

埼玉大学大学院人文社会科学部研究科教授

when an indigenous land system functioned with a particular social structure; the Spanish era (1565 – 1898), when the Spaniards imposed the colonial land system; the modernization era (1898 – 1986) from American rule and independence until the fall of Marcos' dictatorship, when, in the context of a globalizing market economy, land reform was attempted in vain; and the democratization era (1986 – nowadays) when the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program was finally implemented. In each period, particular agrarian policies were introduced, and the local people reacted to them. However, whatever the policy, people seem to remain loyal to the pre-colonial system.

In this communication, we will discuss the process and logic of the appropriation and re-appropriation of land from one period to another and show the necessity for peasants to conserve the pre-colonial system. The discussion refers to both the history of the archipelago as a whole and that of the province of Bohol in particular.

The province of Bohol, located in the centre of the archipelago, belongs to the region of Central Visaya. The province is known for the Dagohoy rebellion that liberated the island from Spanish rule for 85 years beginning in 1744. The province consists of the island of Bohol and neighbouring small islands, just to the south of the island of Cebu. It currently has a population of 1,140,000. Its principle economic activities are agriculture, fishing, and food processing industries, and it has 185,000 hectares of agricultural land. It is famous for

its good-tasting rice. The economic activities are concentrated along the coast, while the economy is less developed in the inland areas where conical hills dominate. The following information on Bohol comes from well-documented studies, as well as from interviews we conducted from 2003 to 2007.

## 2. Pre-colonial land and social system

Before the arrival of European colonizers, the Filipino people had their own land system. The system involved the whole society and continues to function even nowadays in certain respects.

Before colonization, and even under colonization in most parts of the archipelago, land was not considered as private property. There was no centralized regional authority, and people lived in communities called *barangays*, which were based on cognatic kinship networks and were scattered alongside riverbanks, lakeshores, and seacoasts. People thought that invisible spirits lived in and dominated the arable lands and forests. Father Alcina reported in 1668 that people made no distinction between “my land and your land” [Alcina, 2005: 98-99]. People practiced shifting cultivation; their right to cultivated land was usufruct, and people kept the ownership as long as they cultivated that land. Instead, the fruit-bearing trees and landesque capital investments such as irrigation systems were always the property of the persons who planted or constructed them [Urich, 2003: 159]. Here the land right was justified by the logic “the labour invested creates a right to the product.” Beside the cultivated land, people retained ownership of a plot for the residence and a backyard. The usufruct right can be inherited, purchased, bartered, and even pledged as security for debts [Corpuz, 1997: 17].

The pre-colonial land system was interwoven with the social system. Therefore, we call this system the “pre-colonial land and social system.” The land use in the *barangay* was under arrangement of the community chief *datu*. The *datu* was the hereditary chief but did not have any absolute power over the community. A *datu* did not control the territory of the *barangay*, but rather its members, the *timawa*. In this respect, a *datu* and his *timawa* followers were in a reciprocal relationship; the *datu* supports the material and spiritual life of his *timawas* to secure their ‘rights to survive’, and the latter politically support their *datu*, pay him tributes, and fight for the chief in war [W. Scott, 1994: 169-170]. To deliver materials to his followers, a *datu* participated in interregional commerce. When a community member could not repay a debt, he or she became a slave of the creditor as long as he or she did not repay [W. Scott, 1994: 167-168]. In this case, the slave would work for the creditor while the latter ensured the slave’s life, so that the relationship between the chief and his followers and that between the creditor and his slaves were characterized as debt-bondage. The mutual obligations in these vertical relations were based on “*utang na loob* (debt of one’s inner self)”; no social relation could be established without a physical or moral debt, and the lack of repayment of the debt will be viewed in terms of *hiya* (shame).

A *datu*’s authority was based on his ability to communicate with invisible spirits, to settle disputes with the knowledge of customary laws, and to distribute prestigious goods among them. The more followers he attracted with these activities, the more political power he obtained. Here, the idea of what people find in political power was similar to that among the Javanese [Anderson, 1990: 22-23]: power was like a mystical energy that the ascetic and selfless practice allowed him

to accumulate [Borchgrevink, 2003: 55]. People followed a person who accumulated such energy. In contrast, if he failed to morally and materially support his followers, he was considered to have lost the power, and people no longer followed him. Even though the status of *datu* was hereditary, a *datu* could easily become a slave once people found that he had lost the mystic energy, or was indebted to someone else. However, whatever the situation of one's own power or economic status was, each one was thought to be equal in that one had a right to survive with human dignity.

In the pre-colonial land and social system, various resources, from land and trees to imported luxurious goods, were under the chief's control, though the chief did not own them. In this sense, a chief can be seen as a public good of which the community members could avail themselves at a time of difficulty. Land rights were thus closely interwoven with the hierarchical social relations of debt-bondage. The debt-bondage system was common in Southeast Asian societies [Reid, 1983: 8], and a land system similar to that in the Philippines was described even in the Laws of Malacca established early in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Malacca in the Malay Peninsula [Khasnor, 1999: 142-143].

### 3. Appropriation and Re-appropriation in the Spanish Era (1565 – 1898)

With colonization, Spaniards introduced European ideas regarding property rights and founded large estates. The establishment of these large estates, the *haciendas*, is said to be one of the origins of the current inequality of land distribution. But the appropriation process was complicated.

In 1565, Legazpi declared the colonization of the

archipelago. The Spaniards introduced the Spanish land systems in Central Luzon and Cebu; the rest of the archipelago remained under the pre-colonial land and social system. The Spaniards introduced two different land systems: the European feudal system and a modern property-rights system. First, the Spaniards introduced the European feudal system, which claimed that all land was the Crown's property. In order to secure and feed the *conquistadores* and missionary orders, the King of Castilla granted communities in Central Luzon and Cebu to them, where the grantees had the right to collect tributes, without, however, any rights to the lands. Communities thus granted were called *encomienda*. For fear of violence by the colonizers towards the indigenous people, the government ordered that Spaniards could not reside in the countryside with indigenous people, but only in the assigned big cities. Only friars and Chinese *meztiso* could reside among the local people. Because it was difficult for lay Spanish *encomenderos* living in a remote town to collect the tributes, the colonial government consolidated scattered local villages into *pueblos*. In the *pueblos*, the authorities assigned each family a lot sufficient to live on, and each *pueblo* had communal lands. It was declared that the assigned lands could not be sold, and, if the peasant did not cultivate the tract for two years, that tract would be returned to the Crown (*Recopilación de leyes de los Reynos de las Indias*, Tomo II, Libro VI, Título III, Ley xii). The *encomenderos* then asked local leaders to collect the tributes on their behalf. Therefore, the former *datu*s became local leaders to collect tributes. Because *encomenderos* seeking profits abused the local people with heavy tributes, the indigenous population decreased by death and escape. Consequently, the *encomienda* system collapsed at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; lay Spaniards abandoned the *encomiendas* and went back

home to Europe.

The king also permitted ownership of private property to religious orders at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century; the estates thus founded were called *haciendas*. The *hacenderos* developed their estates, especially beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by acquiring abandoned *encomiendas*. *Hacenderos* even illegally incorporated *pueblo* lands into their private estates. Consequently, corruption became generalized among Spaniards. Inside the *hacienda*, indigenous people continued the local practice of small farming and the pre-colonial land use. It was the local chieftain-class people, called the *inquilino*, who collected the imposition on behalf of the *hacenderos*. At the same time, a monetary economy was introduced in the rural areas. As *hacenderos* asked local people to pay their imposition by cash, the peasants adopted cash crops [Corpuz, 1997: 57-58]. Orders of friars, interested in the profit from trading agricultural products, tried to expand their *hacienda* by acquiring *pueblo* lands, which totally violated the royal orders.

The local people responded to colonization in three ways: rebellion, reinterpretation, and re-appropriation. In Central Luzon and Cebu, where *encomiendas* and then *haciendas* developed, indigenous people often stood against the Spaniards. However, in most cases, they were defeated. Local people then tried to reinterpret the new systems in terms of the mutual obligations of pre-colonial vertical relations and integrate the Christian ideas into their own cultural philosophy of *utang na loob* [Nadeau, 1993: 30-31]. Indeed, certain Spanish feudal orders had systems similar to pre-colonial local practices and were understandable in the indigenous conception. Therefore, the feudal relation between Spaniards and their subjects, as well as that between the *inquilinos* and the peasants, was understood in terms of the relation between *datus* and their followers. For land rights too,

the Spanish rule whereby a peasant lost his right of possession on the land after two years without cultivation was similar to the pre-colonial rule of usufruct. These reinterpretations allowed the local people to maintain their pre-colonial social practices, and thus to re-appropriate the system introduced by Spaniards. In fact, as most Spaniards living in remote cities did not intervene in the affairs of their *haciendas*, the peasants in *haciendas* lived in the pre-colonial economic system of small farming. However, with the introduction of a monetary economy, the need for cash increased. When it was impossible to pay the tributes in cash, they mortgaged their land and became indebted to the *inquilinos* and Chinese *mestizo* merchants; as the *inquilinos* and *mestizo* merchants acquired the land when peasants could not repay the debt in accordance with the pre-colonial norms of debt-bondage, the *inquilinos* and *mestizo* accumulated their land [Corpuz, 1997: 59-60]. Those who thus accumulated these lands became the landowning class. This is the origin of the current ruling class of the country. However, these newly ascendant local landlords always followed the norms of *datus* to support their followers' lives on the basis of debt-bondage and mutual assistance. In the context of a commercialized economy, the relation appears to be a patron-client relationship of the moral economy.

The province of Bohol developed differently, because the local chief Dagohoy ousted the Spanish *hacenderos* from the province in 1744 and distributed the lands to the local people. This was an exceptionally successful rebellion against the Spaniards. Dagohoy was reported to be a powerful chief and to have excellent magical powers. Because of the Dagohoy rebellion, the land distribution in Bohol is said to be "exceptionally egalitarian" even today. However, land accumulation began with the end of the rebellion in 1828. Peasants

who occupied the fertile lowland developed their production while others stayed in the less fertile mountains. The peasants occupying the fertile lowland realized excellent productivity and distributed the resulting surplus to obtain social status [Urich, 2003: 160]. Occupants of the lowlands were also recognized as claimants of the neighbouring slopes up to the conical hills, while the hill summits, less productive, remained under communal control. When small peasants needed cash, they often mortgaged their lands; consequently, just as in the *haciendas* in Central Luzon and Cebu, wealthy local people acquired new lands while others lost theirs. Class differentiation increased in the province.

During this era, therefore, three different land systems were interlocked: the European feudal system of *encomiendas*, the private property system of *haciendas*, and the pre-colonial land and social system. While the first weakened with the collapse of *encomiendas* early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century due to its excessive abuse and inefficacy, indigenous people re-appropriated and incorporated this system into the pre-colonial land and social system. Then the private property system and the pre-colonial land and social system encouraged land accumulation under the developing monetary economy. Furthermore, the *inquilinos*' land accumulation in the pre-colonial land and social system was encouraged by the *hacenderos*' land accumulation. However, in Bohol land accumulation happened without *haciendas*, and the pre-colonial land and social system played an important role in the land accumulation process in the hands of local landlord-class people. In the archipelago, some of these people, inspired by European liberalism and nationalistic ideas, launched the anti-Hispanic revolutionary movement, and obtained independence in 1898.

#### 4. Appropriation and Re-appropriation in the Modernization Era (1899 – 1986)

The era under American rule and independence is characterized by ascendant needs for agrarian reforms. However, under the oligarchy of landlords, agrarian reforms were not implemented, while the penetration of the capitalist economy changed the rural relationship and allowed further land grabbing.

Just after the Philippine revolution, Americans colonized the archipelago in 1899. The wealthy local elites supported the Americans. Knowing that unequal land distribution could cause serious social instability, the Americans introduced agrarian reform programs consisting of land entitlement with Torrens system and land distribution: the Cooper Act in 1902, the Public Land Act and the Friar Land Act in 1903, the Rice Share Tenancy Act in 1933. This policy, inspired by the liberal ideology that private ownership is the basis of human liberty and economic development, aimed at transforming indigenous peasants into modern citizens in the capitalist economy, developing agricultural production, and integrating the Philippine economy into the world market, where the archipelago was expected to supply primary goods to the United States [Urich, 2003: 161-162]. With successful agrarian reform, they would enjoy economic prosperity, a relatively egalitarian rural economy, and social stability.

The lands were divided into private property and the public domain. Land entitlement was applied to the private property, where the government granted lands to the occupants as long as each tract did not exceed 16 hectares. The public domain consisted of forests and mines, and was protected. The government then ordered the redistribution of the friars' *haciendas* to local people,

while privately owned estates stayed intact. The government encouraged people to acquire land titles for their already possessed lands; with three years of cultivation, one could claim the land title for that land. At the beginning, people did not accept this because of the complicated procedures. Big landowners, however, soon began to acquire land titles to secure their rights. As the colonial government began to employ Filipinos for public service, people of the landowning class found posts in the government, including in the land-registration office. This situation facilitated landlords' registration of titles, sometimes in fraudulent ways. However, small farmers were unable to claim land titles always due to the complicated and lengthy procedures, and land redistribution could not be realized at all, so that lands accumulated in the hands of landlords through debt payments [Wolters, 1999: 125-127]. Martin notes: "the dual principles of general land entitlements and due process for land owners' property rights, however, were irreconcilable [Martin, 1999: 194]." Consequently, the agricultural production remained insufficient.

At the same time, since the 1920s agricultural production had begun to be oriented towards the global market and to change rural relationships. The landlords, more interested in the accumulation of capital than they had been, asked their share tenants to be leaseholders, and lost their interest in supporting the tenants' rights to survive. The moral economy eroded, and the landlords acquired overwhelming power over small peasants with their capital [J. Scott, 1972: 19-30]. Some landlords even excluded small peasants from their lands. Small farmers who were thus threatened joined socialist and communist movements in the 1930s.

The land accumulation continued even after independence, and the peasant insurgency intensified.

Because land reform is always high on the political agenda since peasant unrest seriously destabilizes a society, the government tried to implement land reforms three times: the Agricultural Tenancy Act of 1954, the Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963, and President Marcos' Presidential Decree 27 of 1972. However, each time, the president being supported by the landowning oligarchy of the Congress and the government, nothing against their economic interests could be implemented. In addition, the land entitlement procedure was always too costly for small and landless farmers [Martin, 1999: 198]. The technological innovation of the Green Revolution further favoured better-off farmers who could avail themselves of high-yield varieties of rice with costly fertilizer, pesticides, and irrigation systems. With the Green Revolution, agricultural production became dependent upon industrial products, and, consequently, monetary capital was absolutely necessary to realize a good harvest. Now, farmers were dependent on merchants and moneylenders. Through this modernization process, landlords became capitalists and replaced tenants with capital [Kerkvliet, 1990: 57]. The small peasants saw their land confiscated by landlords and became landless farmers. The land grabbing and confiscation advanced under President Marcos' dictatorship, allowing his cronies to acquire, legally and illegally, vast lands, and violently oppressing any protestors.

A similar process is observed in Bohol [Urich, 2003: 165-167]. With the application of the Torrens system, wealthy peasants occupying low fertile land acquired the land titles. Small peasants were thus pushed away towards less fertile hillside slopes or hill summits. However, even better-off peasants could not always secure their property rights, because, in difficult times, landlords were also obliged to borrow money from

wealthy merchants in the coastal towns, and mortgaged their land. Naturally, sometimes they could not repay the loans and lost their lands. Some of the peasants who lost their land became migrant farmers in the Muslim lands of Mindanao. The Christian migration provoked land disputes in Mindanao, and the violence escalated. After independence, with the intensification of the conflict in Mindanao, the migrant farmers came back to Bohol. With population growth, it becomes difficult for small peasants to find tracts in fertile areas. Small and landless farmers moved to less fertile mountainous areas.

Small farmers responded to this situation in two ways: insurgency and re-appropriation of the social system.

Since the formation of socialist and communist parties in the 1930s, small peasants had stood against the landlord class. The anti-Japanese resistance, *Hukbalahap*, who fought against the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) in Central Luzon, continued their fight against landlords after liberation. In 1969, the New People's Army (NPA) was founded as a military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Following Maoist ideology, the NPA developed its influence among small and landless peasants. Bohol was one of the fiefs of the NPA where, since the 1970s, small and landless farmers have joined the NPA and launched violent uprisings [Urich, 2003: 172-173]; even the Philippine National Army could not settle the situation.

However, they also re-appropriated the situation. Here, we find the breaking down of the land and social system into a pre-colonial land system and a pre-colonial social system. While, in fertile areas, the pre-colonial land system of usufruct would be incorporated into the property-rights system through land entitlement, it effectively continued to function in marginalized areas, though without any debt-bonded relationship. In Bohol,

small and landless farmers sometimes cultivated lands of absentee owners without agreement, illegally occupied protected areas, or practiced illegal seasonal swiddens (sometimes provoking environmental degradation); they justified their land use through the pre-colonial norms, saying that they could cultivate the unoccupied land and that the use of the lands confirmed the right of possession. The practice certainly contributed to stabilize their lives. When the practice could not satisfy their daily needs, peasants could expect supports from landlords through the pre-colonial social system. Indeed, while landlords' economic status did not depend any longer on the tenants' support, they still needed their political support through debt-bonded relationship to be elected in the democratic system. Therefore, the pre-colonial social system preserved the patron-client nature of the social relationship. However it was based on resources other than lands, such as money and administrative services. Some opportunistic local chiefs gave profits to their followers through vote-buying and profit giving, demonstrated their 'mystic' power, and sometimes even took up arms to force people to support them. Through the use of guns, the violence became generalized. In non-violent cases, the pre-colonial social relationship between a *datu* and his followers was revived, but the chief no longer offered guarantees of land access to followers but rather access to governmental and international funds to secure their life. However, such non-violent re-appropriation naturally generalized the corruption.

Therefore, under American rule and independence, we observe the transformation of the two interlocking land systems, the pre-colonial land and social system and a modern property-rights system. The pre-colonial land and social system began to be broken down into two different systems: a pre-colonial land system and a

pre-colonial social system. When the land system no longer functions as a guarantee for peasants but only serves landlords' profit, small and landless peasants avail themselves of the social system in order to secure their unstable life. Loss of land pushed peasants into the insurgency, while the evolution of the pre-colonial social system generalized the corruption, but guaranteed farmers' 'rights to service'. Therefore, land entitlement policy gave the chance for land accumulation only to the landlord class through pre-colonial practice, and land grabbing was widely practiced throughout the century. The generalized violence and worsened land grabbing, combined with profit-giving to the president's cronies, generated at the beginning of the 1980s an unsustainable financial situation within the government and widespread anger against the unfairness and oppression. Consequently, the People's Power ousted the dictator Marcos in the EDSA revolution in 1986, and the democratization era began.

## 5. Appropriation and Re-appropriation in the Democratization Era (1986 – )

President Aquino came to the power with the expulsion of the dictator Marcos. She promised democratization and land reform through the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, which started in 1987. Finally, an effective agrarian reform began.

The proposed Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) consists of three components: a land redistribution policy, a poverty alleviation program for beneficiaries, and support for land disputes. As President Aquino was from one of the biggest landlord families, she could not effectively implement the CARP; many people thought that the CARP would face difficulty just

as the previous reform projects had (Martin, 1999: 200). Her successor, President Ramos, effectively implemented the CARP by cooperating with NGO leaders. Such cooperation was easy because the political leaders in the democratization had already worked together with the NGOs to oust the dictator.

Initially, the CARP was planned to be accomplished by 1998, but it was extended for ten years, and then extended still farther to 2014. The government redistributes the land in two ways: redistribution of private property in large estates, and redistribution of the public domain. To redistribute private property, the government purchases large estates of over seven hectares of both absentee and resident landlords, under conditions of mutual agreement. The government then sells the land to beneficiaries; the beneficiaries can avail themselves of low-interest loans from the Land Bank of the Philippines, a national bank established for this purpose. The redistribution of public-domain lands is easier, though these lands are less fertile and are often located in protected areas.

According to some reports, the CARP achieved significant results in poverty reduction; according to Reyes's reports on Central Luzon and Panay, agrarian reform beneficiaries have realized higher income and agricultural productivity than non-beneficiaries during the first decade of the CARP [Reyes, 2002: 50]. However, the success of the CARP is nuanced. The program was implemented much more slowly than expected, and most of the lands transferred are from the public domain while privately owned lands transferred were only 18% of the total in 2008. Landowners, who always dominate the congress as well as the provincial and municipal councils, effectively resisted the CARP. As these people are also merchants who supply agricultural provisions and retail agricultural products, it



is difficult for farmers to overcome their resistance. In the case of Bohol, in 2013, of a total 42,099 hectares of target land acquisition and redistribution areas, 40,360 were already accomplished. However, most beneficiaries received lands from the public domain, whereas big estates were not sufficiently dismantled because of landlords' resistance [Urich, 2003: 157]. In this province, two local companies monopolize the agricultural supply and retail sale of agricultural products (even big national companies cannot penetrate the province), so that they dominate rural economy as well as provincial politics and block policies that are against their interests. For the lands from the public domain, they were in peripheral mountainous areas and less suited to productive agriculture. Furthermore, as the public domain is protected from commercial transactions, the beneficiaries were prohibited to sell their lands.

Faced with the limited success of the CARP, farmers responded in the two same ways as in the preceding era: insurgency and re-appropriation of the social system.

For the insurgency, excluded farmers joined in the communist unrest. In the beginning of the democratization era, including in Bohol, these violent uprisings decreased, but never disappeared. Both non-CARP beneficiaries among the small and landless farmers in the mountains and discontented CARP beneficiaries once again joined in the insurgency; the national paper *Philippine Star* reported that many small farmers have been killed on the national level, and a local paper of Bohol stated that the discontent CARP beneficiaries were in communist uprisings even in 2014. However, in Bohol, the uprisings were too fragmented to bring about policy change, as if the insurgency functioned just only as the manifestation of their discontent. Even landlords know that the communist

insurgency is caused by extreme poverty and not by ideology; poverty alleviation is thus necessary.

For re-appropriation, farmers both revived the pre-colonial social system and diversified their income resources. Farmers availed themselves of the pre-colonial social system by asking political leaders to support their lives in exchange for political support. Consequently, vote buying and profit-giving spread widely. In times of difficulty, farmers ask local political chiefs or cooperative leaders to support them, give them some money, or introduce adequate administrative services. For farmers, these governmental resources, as well as the cooperative funds, are just like uncultivated land in the pre-colonial archipelago; everyone can have access to them without worrying about repayment on a well-defined schedule. However, it is the kinship ties which farmers find most important for mutual assistance in times of difficulty; inside the kinship network money and material circulate freely to secure their lives. Similarly, the currently popular practice of cultivating uncleared forest for shifting cultivation, though illegal, follows the pre-colonial norms of land use. In Bohol, people say that when the land is left without cultivation for more than two years, that land is considered to be unoccupied and anyone can come and cultivate it. This rule was affirmed in a royal order during the Spanish era [*Recopilación*, Tomo II, Libro VI, Título III, Ley xii]. For the diversification of income, people practice professions besides cultivation, such as small commerce, the transport business, and hog fattening, sometimes combined with wage labor.

Therefore, although the redistribution policy failed, the interlocking systems were strengthened; in addition to the incorporation of the pre-colonial land system of large estates into a property-rights system, the pre-colonial land system of small tracts remains in place

in peripheral areas where small and landless peasants are also marginalized. In this marginalization, small and landless farmers depend on the pre-colonial social system of renewed patron-client relations, which reinforces corruption and violence.

In all cases, the success of the CARP has been limited, and it does not meet expectations in lowering inequality. For the farmers, the most important objective of the livelihood strategy is to secure their material lives. The pre-colonial social system is suitable for this purpose, with its mutual assistance between the local chief and his or her followers and inside the kinship network, and its usufruct land use. They also diversify their income resources to stabilize the economic situation. However, given the way the pre-colonial social system functions, it is not difficult to imagine that, if the CARP dismantles large estates, landlords will reconstruct them, because small farmers will mortgage these redistributed lands in times of difficulty to earn some money from these landlords. Therefore, without effective poverty alleviation for most farmers, agrarian reform can hardly be successful.

## 6. Conclusion

The history of land policy shows that the land accumulation process was caused not only by the imposition of the *hacienda* system, but also by the effects of the interaction between different interlocking systems: the pre-colonial land and social system, which will be broken down in the 20<sup>th</sup> century into a pre-colonial land system and a pre-colonial social system; a feudal land system, which will significantly weaken with the collapse of the *encomienda* system; and a private property system. In this process, the

pre-colonial practice of debt-bondage contributed to land accumulation in the hands of local leaders by forcing small farmers to lose their usufruct lands when they could not repay the loans. Landlords' rights to the lands thus obtained are secured by land titling. As Philippine politics is always dominated by the landed oligarchy, their resistance makes it difficult to implement agrarian reforms.

In this situation, small and landless farmers responded with both violent insurgency and re-appropriation of the social relationship into the pre-colonial system. The overall reaction of small and landless peasants aimed at securing their unstable livelihoods. However, re-appropriation worsened the corruption and dysfunction of the state machinery. The most effective way out, hence, would be to secure access to lands for farmers to stabilize their lives, not to privatize these lands.

\* This text was presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> international conference of European Rural History Association, the Session 32 "Appropriation and Re-appropriation of Lands", organized by Niccolo Mignemi and Pablo Luna, held on the 10 September 2015 at Universitat de Girona, Catalonia.

## References

- ALCINA, Francisco (2005[1668]) *History of the Bisayan People in the Philippine Islands / Historia de las Islas e Indios de Bisaya, vol. III*, edited by C. Kobak, OFM, & L. Gutiérrez, Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House.
- ANDERSON, Benedict (1990) *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, Ithaca:

- Cornell University Press.
- BORCHGREVINK, Axel (2001) Ideas of Power in the Philippines: Amulets and Sacrifices, *Cultural Dynamics*, 15: 41-69.
- CORPUZ, O. D. (1997) *An Economic History of the Philippines*, University of the Philippines Press.
- KHASNOR Johan (1999) The *Undang-Undang Melaka*: Reflections on Malay Society in Fifteenth-Century Malacca, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 72(2): 131-151.
- KERKVRIET, Benedict (1990) *Everyday Politics in the Philippines: Class and Status Relations in a Central Luzon Village*, University of California Press.
- MARTIN, Aurora (1999) Philippine Land Reform Cycles: Perpetuating U.S. Colonial Policy, *Philippine Studies*, 47(2): 181-205.
- NADEAU, Kathy (1993) Christianity and the Transformation of Philippine Lowland Life: a Critique of Rafael, *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 21(1): 25-38.
- REID, Anthony (1983) Introduction: Slavery and Bondage in Southeast Asian History, *In A. Reid (ed.) Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, University of Queensland Press.
- REYES, Celia (2002) *Impact of Agrarian Reform on Poverty*, Makati (Philippines): Philippine Institute of Development Studies (Discussion Paper Series 2002-02).
- SCOTT, James (1972) The Erosion of Patron-Client Bonds and Social Change in Rural Southeast Asia, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 32(1): 5-37.
- SCOTT, William (1994) Prehispanic Filipino Concepts of Land Rights, *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 22(2): 165-173.
- URICH, Peter (2003) Land Tenure History, Insurgency, and Social Forestry in Bohol, *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 31(2): 156-181.
- WOLTERS, Willem (1999) The Development of Property Rights to Land in the Philippines, 1850-1930, *In T. van Meijl & F. von Benda-Beckmann (eds.) Property Rights and Economic Development: Land and natural Resources in Southeast Asia and Oceania*, London: Kegan Paul International, p. 110-138.