

*Some Aspects of Land and Society in a Pangasinan Community **

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ANY CONSIDERATION of agrarian reform or basic rural amelioration in the Philippines turns primarily upon land reform. Injustices arising from the land tenure system had created by 1950 a situation of agrarian unrest which provided popular support for the Communist-led *Hukbalahap*. Due mainly to the threat posed by the expansion of the *Hukbalahap*, pressure was brought to bear from both within and outside the Philippine government to legislate changes in some elements of the system so contributory to social unrest. Despite the opposition of a large segment of the Philippine elite which has vested interests in land, legislation relating to tenancy relations was passed by the Congress. Known as the Agricultural Tenancy Act of the Philippines it became law on August 30, 1954.

Yet, seven years later, the same basic tenancy system which existed before the passage of the law can be found in most regions of the Philippines. One might ask what the cause is of such conservatism in the face of reforms so necessary. It seems to me that a basic principle of society and culture is at the root of the failure to incorporate more widely even these rather moderate reforms.

I would call this principle *social inertia*, the tendency toward equilibrium in social and cultural systems. Though the analogy with physical inertia is not completely consistent, it may help provide clarity to this characteristic of societies and cultures. Social and cultural systems, like physical matter, are in dynamic equilibrium, a

balance of opposing forces. They tend to remain at relative rest, perpetuating themselves over time by incorporating changes within the existing systems as long as opposing forces can be kept in balance. But, once conflicts within the systems become so great that they cannot be resolved within the existing structure or pattern, such changes continue until conflicts are resolved and opposing forces achieve a new equilibrium under the new structure or pattern. So it is with the social system in the Philippines. It strongly resists basic changes in its structure. The role of the economically and politically dominant upper class in resisting basic changes in the power structure, any of which would be inimical to its interests, is obviously an important factor resisting change. Perhaps more important, however, is resistance due to social inertia deriving from the functional inter-relatedness of aspects of the social structure. Because the parts are functionally adapted and interpenetrating to form the whole, the solidarity of the structure is protected against all but irreconcilable conflicts. But on the other hand, a basic change which can no longer be resisted in one part of the structure must, because of this same linkage, rattle down the whole structure causing dislocations in all its parts.

Man's relationship to the land is so basic in an agricultural country that to allow changes in that relationship exposes the whole structure to change. Carrasco's reference to this fundamental relationship for Tibet is generally applicable for the Philippines. "The importance of land tenure for an understanding of an agricultural country like Tibet can hardly be overestimated. Property relations define, with

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reference to things, the social relations maintained by people in the process of production and distribution. In Tibet, where land is the most important means of production, the land system reveals the foundation of the social structure. As in other stratified agricultural societies, land rights are closely tied to all kinds of social functions. Various services rendered to the state or to individuals are paid for in land, while rights over land imply social duties and often important political functions. The structure of all important social groups, from the family to the state, can be seen in the land system."¹ If the land is the cornerstone of an agrarian society, there is little wonder that groups and institutions are massed to perpetuate the existing land-man relationship.

But the land tenure system in the Philippines cannot long resist change. Agrarian reform is both necessary and inevitable. It is a necessary prerequisite of real economic development. It is necessary too if more equitable and just economic, political and educational opportunities are to be made available to all individuals and groups in societies. Land reform is inevitable because social forces are already in motion which can only be suppressed by the most ruthless totalitarian means and even then not for long. The conflicts of interest and differences in opportunity among groups in society are too deep and too easily recognized. The majority, who have negligible or no share in economic and political power can no longer be put off with promises or tidbits.

Serious agrarian reform must become the concern of the Philippine democracy soon if it is to retain any degree of control over its ultimate and far-reaching effects. But necessary as it is, agrarian reform is not, by itself, a panacea for the ills of economic and social backwardness. If it is to be successful in contributing to overall economic devel-

opment it must be accompanied by the accumulation and investment of capital and by a rapid advance in industrialization. There are difficult times ahead but the choice is not very wide, for the only other alternative must eventually be violent revolution.

Before this chain reaction really gets underway, we had better earnestly seek to understand how the land is linked within the social structure and with the various aspects of culture. We must try to anticipate and prepare for some of the consequent dislocations in Philippine society and culture which will likely follow in the wake of land reforms. This is a major task which will require the efforts of all the social science disciplines. The work must begin now.

Approach and Methodology

On a micro-scale and as part of a wider study of the way of life of a rural community in Pangasinan, I have focused upon land tenure and its interrelationships in a local part-culture and part-social structure. I have now been engaged in the fieldwork portion of the research for eight months. Thus the remarks at this juncture must be considered as tentative. It is hoped that they will still prove to be insightful and stimulating to further thinking about this complex problem.

The approach to the study of the problem is anthropological. The community study method is used. Arensberg has quite properly called it a "descent-in-depth to the grassroots of culture, in a local setting, where one can still see culture operate and can follow its interconnections."² Firth has described the technique further. "This unit is submitted to systematic study over a considerable length of time (usually one year or longer) in order to elucidate detailed social relations between as many persons as possible. In it one or more sub-units

¹ Pedro Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959), pp. 3-4. See also Raymond Firth, *Elements of Social Organization* (London: Watts, 1956), pp. 29, 31-32.

² Conrad Arensberg, in *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960), p. 98.

may emerge for intensive analysis, these usually comprising the households with which the investigator has most intimate daily contact."³ I have supplemented this basic approach with techniques for the collection of specific classes of data, but fundamentally it remains a micro-analysis of a single community. The method is intensive rather than extensive.

There is an obvious limitation, therefore. Its very strength might paradoxically be its greatest weakness. For my findings derive from the study of a single Philippine barrio and quite clearly no single barrio can be taken as typical of the approximately 20,000 similar units in the rural Philippines. Nevertheless, it seems that there is a valid control for this potential shortcoming. If the community is selected with certain criteria in mind and its common as well as its unique features are carefully specified, it can be taken as representative of a certain class of communities.

I take the position that underlying and, in some cases, reinforcing the cultural regionalisms which exist in the lowland Philippines (though they originated in historical and ethnolinguistic differences) are related factors deriving mainly from the environment. These factors which are perhaps more basic in contemporary regionalism, are climate, land use, productive processes and land tenure.

The community under investigation was selected with the following such considerations in mind:

- (1) A crop-land use pattern based upon mixed crops, a situation fairly typical for the wet season-dry season regime found in Pangasinan and the Ilocos coast;

In this regime, crop rotation is typical on the unirrigated fields during the dry season where corn, mongo beans and, more recently, Virginia tobacco are grown. Sugarcane may be a single crop on portions of such fields. In the wet season upland or lowland rice is grown. On

the irrigated lowland fields, two crops of rice are usually grown.

- (2) A land tenure situation based upon relatively small holdings as opposed to large haciendas or plantations, in which the proportion of tenants to small owner-farmers is not extremely high; that is, moderate tenancy;

This is also typical for most of Pangasinan and the Ilocos coast.
- (3) A relationship between owners and tenants tending to be of the "traditional" Philippine type;
- (4) Population size nearly typical of Pangasinan barrios;
- (5) Access to communication nearly typical of Pangasinan barrios;
- (6) Absence of directed or rapid cultural change.

It is now possible to specify more accurately the land use and land tenure patterns found in the barrio under study. Within the limits of the barrio there are some 250 square hectares. Approximately 10% are planted in economically important fruit trees, bananas, bamboos or trees useful for firewood and other purposes, or are in use as residential sites, trails, roads, creeks, irrigation canals, dikes and boundaries. The remainder, which is agricultural land, is divided into about 21% upland (i.e. it is so unfavorably watered that it cannot produce irrigated rice) and about 60% lowland capable of producing at least one crop of irrigated rice with natural irrigation (i.e. rain water during rain season). Approximately 7% of the latter is sufficiently well irrigated by artificial means to produce a second crop of irrigated rice. During the dry season the remaining lowland (53%) and the upland (21%) are used for the rotation of mongo, tobacco and corn, mongo and other vegetables such as peanuts, eggplant, tomatoes, camote, cassava, or *tugi*. A small portion, mostly upland, is reserved for one crop per year, sugarcane.

Land in the barrio is divided into holdings of various sizes. All are astonishingly

³ Firth, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

small when compared with most regions in the Philippines. The largest holding by one individual is ten hectares, and like other relatively sizeable holdings, there are numerous heirs awaiting its division. There are three other individual holdings over six hectares. Five other holdings formerly of comparable size or larger one was twenty-four hectares, another eleven hectares are now divided among heirs and average about two hectares in size. About 25% of the total hectareage of the barrio are owned by persons who live in the poblacion or in other poblaciones. About 60% of all agricultural land owned in the barrio are over two hectares in size. The remaining 40% are in holdings of less than two hectares. But this does not tell the full story, for the average farm size is about one hectare taking owners and tenants together. In short, holdings are small and are getting smaller. The products of about 25% of the total hectareage go out of the barrio to the poblacion.

The Customary Basis of Land-Holding

The rights of ownership in land in the Philippines today are derived from those which evolved in the Western legal tradition. Private ownership of land, including the rights of possession, control, use, and disposal, is recognized by the state and codified in the laws of the land. The subject need not concern us further, therefore, except for certain customs (many of which are not codified) which define who may hold land, how it may be used and how it may be transferred. Because these constitute important aspects of the land tenure system they deserve brief consideration.

In Pangasinan as in other regions in the lowland Philippines, the allocation of ownership is made to both men and women without distinction. The rule of inheritance of land is equalitarian regardless of age or sex. Rights of ownership are extended to individuals but the family can exert strong pressure over an individual's exercise of his

rights. Thus, parents or elder siblings may advise a member of the family to desist in a case of disposal for unwise or improper purposes. Parents also maintain their authority over their children before inheritance with the threat of withholding inheritance from deviant members. In the family of procreation, spouses, their offspring and primary relatives can raise a voice against a father or mother who would dispose of land by sale or mortgage for improper purposes. Conjugal and individual property is viewed as belonging to the children after their birth. Not only the land but the products gained from its use are to be administered for the equal share of all members. The right of use may be transferred by an owner to another person (his tenant) for consideration (i.e. a share of the produce of the land). The relationship between the owner who retains the rights of control and disposal and his tenant who possesses the right of use, is customary under the traditional system. It contains a set of mutual expectations and reciprocal obligations. There is a division of power based upon the division of rights, and the flow of power is unidirectional. The tenants' rights to continued tenure are weak despite the protection provided by law.

Finally, two customary institutional mechanisms for the passage of land rights must be mentioned: the institutions of inheritance (*tawir*) and mortgage (*prendaan* or *pacto de retro*).

Inheritance in Pangasinan takes place at two times in the life cycle and land is the most valuable property to be inherited. The first division occurs as sons reach the age of marriage and require a dowry (*dasel*) and expenses for the wedding. The second, a complete division of land and other property, takes place after death. Before any inheritance takes place, the total value of an individual's property is calculated. This is done by the parents of a family separately. Their conjugal property is also treated separately. These total cash valua-

tions are then apportioned among the number of heirs regardless of their age or sex.

Although custom dictates that all heirs should share equally in inheritance, in practice a person may withhold the share of an erring son or daughter. This may be done by withholding the dowry available to a son as a final sanction guaranteeing the parents' voice in his choice of a spouse. It may also be done by testament or instruction just before death, though this practice is relatively rare. It is most common to leave the inheritance to be divided by the heirs themselves. Such a procedure may lead to a struggle among the heirs for a bigger or a better share. In fact the time of inheritance is often the point at which the strong solidarity of the family of orientation is broken. In any event, the outcome of equalitarian inheritance (combined with a relatively large family size, frequent secondary marriages after the death of a spouse and the relatively rare occurrence of bearing and supporting offspring outside of marriage) is the fragmentation of land holdings. Two tendencies mitigate against this tendency to a limited degree. One is the uncommon practice of some families to divide their land only or mostly among the male heirs. The second is the fairly common practice of second and even first cousin marriage with the primary idea of reuniting holdings.

Mortgage is the other institutional practice which defies the law, for it is not a true mortgage but a sale with the right to repurchase. When cash is needed, an owner may offer to another person, who is usually not a moneylender in this municipality, a parcel of his property. The mortgage value is determined by the size and the productivity of the parcel for one year. An agreement is drawn up before witnesses. It usually specifies that the rights of possession and use are forfeited by the mortgagor in favor of the mortgagee for a specified period and that these rights will revert to the former when he has paid the amount of the mortgage within this time. The minimum period

is one agricultural year, for the crops produced that year become the interest. The maximum is usually ten years. If the mortgagor fails to buy back his land within the agreed time he forfeits all rights to it. Before the New Civil Code of 1950 it was extremely easy and common for the mortgagee to consolidate full ownership. Mortgagees tended to come from an economically more secure group than the mortgagor, were better educated and usually had more influential connections in society. Therefore, it was an easy matter to change the tax declaration to their name and the land was theirs. Very often the former owner continued to work the land as a tenant. The New Civil Code provides the mortgagor with more security against losing his land by requiring that a petition be filed in court before the land can be consolidated by the new owner. Nevertheless, the *prendaan*, like inheritance, contributes to the fragmentation and small size of holdings. Both also contribute to the complex spatial distribution of holdings.

Land Tenure and Social Status

Without discounting the historical and cultural factors which affect the way of life of little communities dependent upon a larger entity (e.g. indigenous traditions and beliefs, and Hispanic and American influences), it is profitable for our purposes to start with the contemporary economic factors which affect its character. I will take the position that the way in which people earn their living structures many of their cultural forms and social arrangements. Like any agricultural community, earning a living in the barrio under study is dependent upon one's relationship to the land, the primary means of production and source of wealth. The type of relationship that one has to this primary resource largely determines his standing in the community. I have previously suggested that the processes associated with the production and sale of certain crops within a certain climate regime largely determine land use, influence

land tenure and help to make the way of life in a region different from other areas in the Philippines which have different patterns of land use, crop emphases, and tenure conditions.

Beginning from the occupations by which persons make a living in the barrio, with a particular focus on the relationship of each to the land, I asked the question, "What social distinctions are recognized in this society on this basis?" I was led to a hierarchy of statuses which in the economic sphere rests heavily upon the type of access that one has to land in order to derive a living from its products. But I found this to be a dynamic system in which individuals could and fairly often do change their status during their lifetime. Though it is most easy to move downward or to retain your status, there are possibilities despite considerable odds to move upward in the system, though usually not more than one rung.

From observation of life within and outside the community over several months, a number of analytically derived but empirically verifiable vertical status categories stood out on the basis of occupation and access to the land. These categories corresponded to certain behavioral differences among barrio members, and certain cultural symbols seemed to be associated with them. Furthermore, families so categorized could be ranked consistently by a sample of community members. Analytically I found them to be characterized by a progressive weakening of a claim to derive a living from the land. Operationalizing of the categories led to modifications and improvements in consistency. They are now sufficiently refined to be useful in guiding further analysis and giving us understandings about life in the community.

A detailed analysis of the hierarchy of access to the land indicated in the categories is an important part of the remainder of this paper. These are empirically derived cate-

gories and are those observed in one municipality of Pangasinan.

The first category are "medium landowners." In this category are found the "big" landowners of the municipality. Although a few of them live in other municipalities and even in other provinces, most of them reside in the poblacion and only very rarely in the barrios. The maximum landholding in the municipality is about one hundred hectares. Thus even the largest landowners here are relatively small compared to other places in the Philippines. I therefore call them "medium" on the supposition that there are probably two categories above this if the Philippines is taken as a whole—the large and the very large landowners. The minimum total holding of families who fall into this status is about twenty hectares in this municipality. In most cases the land held is divided into a number of parcels which may be located in different barrios. There are six landholders of this category holding land in the barrio under study. Their holdings range in size from ten hectares to three hectares. All of them live in the poblacion. They do not take an active part in any of the productive activities regarding their land; they only administer the distribution of its products.

The second category consists of "small owner-farmers and secure tenants." In this category fall nuclear families who own small agricultural holdings (maximum 4 to 5 hectares), families who may be part-owners and tenants and families who are tenants only but will probably inherit a little land sometime during their lives—or who have a relatively secure claim to cultivate certain lands belonging to another. This category of families lives in the barrio. They are relatively secure among their barriomates because they own farm lands which are large enough to feed and support their families by minimum local standards. An emergency such as sickness or death of a family member may cause hardship but will not force the family deeply into debt.

Approximately 17% of families of the barrio fall into this status category.

The third category is that of "insecure tenants." Families which fall into this status category usually own no land, not even their house lot. Furthermore, they will probably not inherit land of any significance during their lifetime. Some families in this category are there, however, because they are only beginning their own family. They will probably become secure tenants or small owners by the time the family reaches its zenith of development. "Insecure tenants" have little claim or security in their rights to cultivate the lands they farm. Their farms tend to be smaller and less productive than those of small owners and secure tenants, and their share of the produce is usually insufficient to support the family without supplementary activities and earnings. An emergency or crisis would probably force the family into debt. But they have a margin of security against hard times by virtue of the traditional system of mutual obligations under which they can request help or loans from their landowners. Approximately 44% of families in the barrio fall into this class. Their farms tend to be on the larger holdings of the barrio.

The fourth category comprises "agricultural laborers and the underemployed or unemployed." This is a merged category occupationally, for under analysis I found that agricultural laborers never support their families by this work alone. The category, thus, is made up of families who derive their living by pursuing more than one occupation. They may be agricultural laborers seasonally, seek irregular employment in carpentry or craft skills, repair and sell used clothes, sell vegetables or native cakes, become fishermen or agents of various kinds and may receive some support from relatives. Some families are in this category because they have retired from active farming. Families in this category are economically insecure. They usually own no land, perhaps not even their house site.

Furthermore, they either have no claim or no inclination to farm land in the barrio. They earn their living by selling their labor in various ways, but a significant portion usually comes from harvesting rice, sugarcane and tobacco. A crisis or emergency usually forces them into debt. Furthermore they do not have the security provided by a landowner that tenants have. Their usual source of loans is a relative, if possible, or moneylender. Approximately 32% of families fall into this status.

A last category, the "regularly employed," is a non-agricultural one. It is made up of families mostly dependent for their livelihood on a salary received for regular non-agricultural employment. Such employment includes school teaching, working in the poblacion, in the mines, or in Manila, and soldiering. Families making up this category may or may not own land. There is a wide range noted in the economic security achieved by families in this category. This seems to rest upon whether or not land is owned or was converted into support for higher education and the attainment of semi-professional status. Nevertheless a certain degree of economic security derives from a steady salary per se. Approximately 5% of barrio families derive their livelihood mainly from this source.

With these categories, just as with all attempts at classifications, the classes tend to blur at the margins when the classifier tries to place individual cases into the classes. This does not make classification any less desirable for its purpose is not to be 100% perfect but to provide better understanding of the unit under study. In the case of the present material under study there are certain other factors which help explain the uncertainty in classifying all cases. In the first place, one family residing in the barrio, though really falling under small owner status, attempts to behave externally as if they were medium owners. In the second place, a few families including the one above do not fit as neatly as they might because of the fact that they re-

ceive a small but regular pension check, a periodic allotment from Guam, Hawaii, or the United States, or additional capital gained from work overseas. These additional sources of income give the families a special margin of economic security no matter what category they belong to. The third factor is that all families in the "insecure tenant" category at times will engage in the subsidiary economic activities such as many of those which form the main support of agricultural laborers, underemployed or unemployed. With the latter, however, the frequency of such activities and the number of such activities engaged in increases markedly. The last factor is that families may shift back and forth between the two lowest categories in the hierarchy during the life cycle of the family.

To see what the relative economic security means in concrete terms for the statuses discussed, we have only to turn to a few statistics. There are 1487 persons living in the barrio (slightly less than one square mile), or 595 persons per square kilometer. Approximately 17% of these live in families of small owners or secure tenants, 44% live in families of insecure tenants, 32% live in families of agricultural workers and underemployed and 5% live in families of the non-agriculturally regularly employed. One half of 25% of the agricultural produce goes to landowners who live in the poblacion. Perhaps one-half of 10-15% more goes to tenants who farm lands in the barrio but live in neighboring barrios. However, approximately the same percentage comes back by virtue of tenants from this barrio who work lands in neighboring barrios. Some persons in the barrio also own lands in other barrios but perhaps this too balances itself out. Though calculations at present are only approximate they are indicative enough for our use. Farms of insecure tenants average about .85 hectares divided into two, three, or four field areas. The farms of small owners and secure tenants average about 1.3 hectares. This area also is usually broken up into three or four separate par-

cel. Because of the small size and the complex separation of holdings, small owners who are farmers may not cultivate their own land. They may cultivate a part of it which is nearby. They will let a tenant farm the remainder and they themselves will become tenant of someone's land which is more near at hand. In a situation like this where farm size is so small, no one can be very secure except the medium landowner and the well salaried.

The Traditional Tenancy System

We should now turn from the status hierarchy established mainly on the basis of one's relationship to the land to the nature of the agricultural tenancy system as it operates in the barrio under study. In this place, agricultural tenancy means share tenancy. That is, there is no leasehold tenancy and there is no subleasing. All tenants are share-croppers. This share tenancy system, however, takes different forms according to the kind of land involved in the tenancy and the crops grown on that land. The two most important kinds of land affecting the system are upland and lowland and the two most important crops are rice and Virginia tobacco. As each crop requires different input of labor, each is represented differently in the system of shares. All of the above factors, the predominance of share tenancy, differential land use and the variety of crops, affect the character of the tenancy system.

There are four main elements seen in the agricultural tenancy system in the barrio: the tenancy agreement, the system of sharing, credit and debt, and the tenancy relationship, that is, the institutionalized patterns of social interaction between the landowner and his tenant.

The tenancy agreement is almost never a written agreement in this part of Pangasinan. Furthermore, it is left unstated between the owner and tenant. The conditions of the agreement are so commonly accepted and so thoroughly understood be-

tween the two parties by custom that they need not be specified in advance. I therefore prefer the use of the term agreement to contract. If the customary terms of the agreement are breached by one of the parties concerned, gossip, criticism or perhaps stronger sanctions will be applied. However, as the privileges of the parties to the relationship differ, in a superordinate-subordinate manner, the freedom to apply sanctions is also unequally distributed. The flow of power is from the landowner to the tenant. This is a direct result of their differential access to derive a living from the land. Land is a scarce and a much desired good. The tenancy relationship is initiated when a landowner is approached and asked by a prospective tenant for the right to cultivate a parcel of his land. Because most prospective tenants have no claim to the bestowal of this right, the granting of his request by the landowner establishes the unequal character of the relationship. For the grant of the right of use is viewed as a favor and it places upon the tenant a debt of gratitude (*utang na maong ya linawa*, literally, "debt of good feeling") which can never fully be settled.⁴

The usual terms of the agreement include the following: land is furnished by the landowner and, if necessary, a small house-lot for the tenant's dwelling. The work animal, all farm implements and labor are furnished by the tenant and his family. Irrigation fees, if applicable, are paid by the landowner. He also provides the seed for the first crop. All else, preparing fields, preparing and sowing seedbeds, pulling seedlings, transplanting rice and tobacco seedlings, expenses for fertilizer or insecticide, if it is used, and transportation of the product to the owner's residence is borne by the tenant. Some initial capital is thus re-

quired of the tenant before he can enter into a tenancy relationship. Ordinarily, if a tenant does not have a carabao and a set of farm tools, he is all but disqualified from even applying as a prospective tenant. Decisions about what crops will be grown are usually made by the landowner while the techniques of farming are left to the tenant.

The material aspects of the agreement are accompanied by certain non-material services which are more contingent upon the tenant than on the landowner. As I have said, from the inception of the relationship the tenant feels a debt of gratitude to the owner who has done him the favor of giving him a piece of land to till. Therefore, he is willing to show his gratitude by helping his landlord in chores, repairs and odd jobs around the owner's house when he has the opportunity. He and his family also take the opportunity to help his landlord when the latter celebrates a party or life crisis event. In turn, the landowner usually places himself in a position in which he may be asked for assistance during emergencies and crises in the lives of his tenants. Thus he goes on performing favors for his tenants which earn their continued gratitude.

The system of sharing in the barrio generally falls into two categories: (1) the 50:50 sharing system and (2) the 2/3:1/3 sharing system. The long traditional system for rice sharing is that of sharing the net production of the harvest equally: the 50:50 system. There are three forms of harvesting and threshing but all three reward those who help in the harvest with 1/5 of the total product. Because this 1/5 comes out of the total product it may be said that the landowner and the tenant share equally in the costs of harvesting and threshing. Remember that all other costs aside from seed and irrigation fees are borne by the tenant. He may pay for the pulling of seedling in cash or through an exchange of labor (*amoyo*) with his neighbors. Transplanting is usually paid for through labor exchange. The 50:50 sharing system is car-

⁴ For a fuller treatment of a nearly identical system see Mary R. Hollnsteiner's description of *utang na loob* in her "Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines," *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Religious Acculturation Conference* (Manila: Baguio Religious Acculturation Conference, 1961), pp. 121-48.

ried over and applied to all other field crops except tobacco. Thus corn, sugarcane, mongo, cassava, string beans, peanuts, tomatoes, eggplant, camote are all divided equally, after harvesting expenses.

Tobacco, because of the additional labor input and expense in cultivating and processing, is shared 2/3 for the tenant and 1/3 for the landowner. Again, all costs and labor in preparing seedbeds, maintaining seedlings, transplanting seedlings, watering, spraying, weeding, picking leaves, sewing leaves for drying are borne by the tenant before sharing takes place. From that point the processing is taken over by the landowner who provides the curing barn, and the firewood for curing. Tenants give the owner 1/5 of their share for use of facilities for the curing of their tobacco. One-third of this curing expense goes as payment for the barn operator who tends the fire. The operator is usually one of the tenants.

Sugarcane is treated like rice in the sharing system. The owner provides the land. The tenant plants the sugarcane and watches over the fields. This is the end of his job. Either the landowner or the sugar central will then take over the harvest by employing laborers. After harvesting expenses the tenant shares with the landowner a certain price according to the tonnage produced.

Before leaving the sharing system mention should be made of a practice which is not yet common but is popular among tenants and may become important for its effect of giving incentive to increase yields. Some medium landowners offer a cash reward of ₱1.00 for every cavan of palay which the owner receives as his share after the harvest. If this practice of giving additional incentive should become widespread, it could mean better reception by tenants of technological improvements in rice growing.

The present findings regarding the system of credit and debt, as these are part of the tenancy system, are incomplete. Therefore, only a few general comments can be made

safely. Most significant is the finding that in this region the landowner is not for most of his tenants the most important source of credit in kind or in cash. Perhaps this is an index of the relative economic security found in the barrio. Tenants here are not constantly in debt, but they do live by a slim margin of economic security. It is also a commentary upon the relationship between the landowner and the tenant in this part of Pangasinan, for most tenants make efforts not to borrow from their landowners. Some claim that they would be ashamed to do so. This is an indication of the importance on the part of the tenant of maintaining his self-respect and dignity despite his status. Herein may lie one of the big differences between the traditional tenancy system found in most of Pangasinan and the absentee system found in areas of extreme and insecure tenancy like Nueva Ecija and Pampanga. In the former a tenant is allowed to enjoy some measure of self-respect, in the latter he is not. Those tenants who do borrow in kind in the barrio under study borrow only at the hungriest time of the year (September) and then they usually borrow in small amounts. Most landowners accordingly take no interest in such loans. They collect it in the same amount at harvest time. With sugarcane the situation is a little bit different. Tenants on sugarcane lands who need money in September "sell" their share to the owner at its current value, that is, as part of the value that it will receive at maturity in December and January. The profits gained by the owner from such transactions can be considerable. However, the tenant keeps his dignity for he is selling his share and is not begging for a loan. When money is needed, tenants again do not go to their landowners. They go instead to relatives, to persons who receive a pension or an allotment, or to persons who have cash on hand because of regular salaried employment or cash derived from small businesses.

The landowner-tenant relationship, or the system of social interaction and natural ex-

pectations, is the last aspect of the contemporary tenancy system. What is found in this municipality is the "traditional" relationship in Philippine agricultural tenancy. As previously stated, from its very inception the relationship between owner and tenant is an unequal one based upon superordination-subordination and a debt of gratitude. The degree of inequality correlates well with the status of each party in the relationship in the hierarchy of access to land. Equality is closely approached among secure tenants who cultivate the land of small owners. On the other hand, greatest inequality is found between medium owners and agricultural laborers and next between medium owners and insecure tenants, etc.

Yet, in this part of Pangasinan some provision is made for the maintenance of self-respect and dignity on the part of the tenant despite the basic inequality which exists in the relationship. This provision for allowing the maintenance of self-respect of the tenant and a second provision which extends a degree of security to the tenant form the basic foundation of the traditional relationship and system of agricultural tenancy. The security provided in the system results from a second aspect of the relationship, reciprocal obligations. An owner, particularly a medium owner, is obliged, in a manner of speaking, to help a tenant when he is able. Help includes giving him land to till. This is supposed to be one of the roles deriving from his relative position in society. He is in a position from his status and connections to assist the tenant when he is asked to use his influence on the tenant's behalf. This is an extremely important benefit in a society in which personal influence is so important. On his part, the tenant should show his gratitude for the favors or potential favors of his landowner by giving him his loyalty and by doing services for him when opportunity presents itself. But again, the kind and importance of reciprocal obligations is affected by the status positions of the owner and the tenant, relative to one another. The most and the strongest obligations are bind-

ing upon those who are most widely separated in status. Owing to their inequality in status, each member of the partnership is in a position to perform important social functions for the other.

Despite the recognized inequality of the relationship it is made as personal as possible. This is again functional when the relationship is between landowners and tenants separated widely in status, for it tends to bridge the social distance and to discourage suspicion and antagonisms between them. Thus the relationship employs the proper kin terms for age and respect. Among those small owners and tenants of nearly equal status there may be a true consanguineal or affinal basis upon which the personal relationship is built. Contrary to expectations, the *padrino* system is not extremely important as a device to strengthen the personal tie between an owner and tenant. In the barrios, *compadres* are mostly chosen by the criteria of kinship and friendship among social equals. Particularly important for leveling the differences between owners and tenants in the barrio, besides kinship, are common residence, mutual labor, mutual aid and mutual attendance at feasts given for various purposes. None of these devices makes the relationship any more equal but they take the sting out of the inequality which exists. The real social distance in the relationship is expressed at the break between medium owners and the other categories below it. It is expressed in social pressure against marriage between owners' and tenants' children, in differences in consumption, and in significant differences in access to prestige, power, and influence in this social system.

From the above we can see that the relationship is based upon a mutually understood set of expectations about the roles played by each partner in the relationship. A "good" landowner is one who does not treat his tenants as social inferiors and who does not remind the tenant of his debt of gratitude. He does not supervise too much; instead he demonstrates his trust in his part-

ner by leaving the farming and even the division of shares to the farmer. He assumes his part of the mutual obligations by using his influence on his tenants' behalf and giving them help during emergencies and contributions for the celebration of life crisis events. On the other hand, the "good" tenant should be loyal to his landowner and should assist the owner by giving services to him when the opportunity presents itself. This relationship has often been called paternalistic. The term seems to fit, in my experience. But it must not be seen as a completely one-sided dependence of the tenant upon his landowner. It is a relationship based upon mutual dependence which is adaptive as it functions in the larger system. This does not make the traditional agricultural tenancy system "good," but it makes it more difficult to replace without considerable dislocation in the entire social system.

Some Social and Cultural Correlates of Land Tenure

We are now prepared to look in greater detail at the way in which the land tenure system is interrelated with other aspects of culture and society in the barrio under study. In this analysis the variables examined are considered to be completely interpenetrating. For convenience, and because of the basic importance of land in an agricultural community, we have treated land tenure as the independent variable and aspects of society and culture as dependent variables. But it is recognized that the sets of variables are so closely interrelated that it is difficult to assign the direction of causation. What is most important is to understand that by changing one variable, disequilibrium is set up in those variables to which it is linked.

With this in mind we may now show how the land tenure system found in the community under study relates to the socio-cultural system. Many of the interrelationships have been previously mentioned and will only be stated in summary here. One

qualification must be mentioned. Because of the stage of the field research, the status category "medium owners" is the least known of the status categories among people of the poblacion. Therefore, remarks made about the former are from the vantage point of the barrio.

Social Class—We have already discussed how the hierarchy of socio-economic statuses in the community under study is largely determined by one's access to land. We have also noted the difference which exists between medium owners and small owners on the basis of the size of lands held.

Social inequality became fairly well established in its present form in the municipality after the private ownership of land by Filipinos was re-established in the latter half of the 19th century. Vast tracts of forest land were opened for homesteading. A number of mechanisms have led to the relative concentration of holdings which exists today. A system of social class, some of the features of which have been mentioned previously, rests basically on these inequalities in land holdings. The class system now is fairly well consolidated and great upward mobility within the system is now fairly well restricted. Through the years of the American regime much land was converted into education and the attainment of professional status. Money earned by professionals was often reconverted to land by purchase or mortgage holding.

Power—High social status which is largely dependent upon landholding usually carries access to power in the social structure. Aside from wealth, prestige, leadership, and politics are important elements in the structure. I have not studied the medium landowners sufficiently to be absolutely sure, but from those who hold land in the barrio under study they seem to have access to power if they are so inclined. Within the barrio itself their power is not strongly validated except at election time,

Within the barrio leadership is exclusively dominated by the economically most secure, that is, by small landowners or secure tenants and by the well salaried, regularly employed. All barrio lieutenants in the recent past have come from the former category. Others who take an active part in the decisions of barrio or sitio affairs come from those categories. They are also the categories whose members take an active part in national politics. Persons in these categories are the ones who act as the lower rung in the hierarchy of national political alliances. They have better access to influential persons and politicians in the poblacion than do their barriomates, and they tend to act as intermediaries between the two social classes for certain purposes. Part of their leadership derives from their relatively higher education and wider experience compared to their barriomates but education too is closely linked to the land for its financial support. Persons who are good "talkers" in political discussions also almost all come from the economically secure categories.

On the other hand, out of 23 persons who tried to sell their votes in the last election, small farmers and secure tenants were unrepresented whereas insecure tenants were proportionately well represented (11) and agricultural laborers and the underemployed were proportionately best represented (12). Significantly, they explained that they tried to sell their votes for they could not benefit from a politician's patronage and therefore tried to benefit from a cash sale of their vote.

Education—With regard to education, the medium landowners have the average highest attainment and the highest absolute attainment, for many of them attain professional status. Within the barrio, the highest average attainment is 3rd year high school among the families of small owners and secure tenants. They also were represented by nearly all of the post high school educated and had all of the college or university graduates. The average high-

est attainment for the insecure tenant group was grade 6, but they had the widest range, from no education to two years college (Elementary Teacher Certificate). They also had the second highest number attending high school. For agricultural workers and the underemployed, the average highest attainment was grade 5. They had no high school graduates. Higher education often requires the sale or mortgage of land.

Succession—As an index of mobility, succession to status was studied in the framework of the tenure groups. It was found that one's parents will usually have come from the same category, or a category above one's own where downward mobility is usually due to the effect of fragmentation of land among heirs. Some offspring move to semi-professional, regularly employed status. But among persons gaining a living from agriculture in the barrio, those who move up in status are either Ilocanos or Pangasinenses who live up to the expectations of hard work and thriftiness that characterize the Ilocano stereotype.

Degree of Relationship—Siblings are usually in the same status category as oneself or are in the margins of it. Separation by one category in the status hierarchy occurs outside the first order of relationship. Separation by two categories occurs only outside the second order of relationship. For example, if you are a small landowner, it is unlikely that any relative closer than your second cousin will be, or will be married to, an agricultural worker.

Compadre System—In the barrio, compadres and comadres are usually chosen among relatives or friends and are usually among social equals. For baptism or confirmation, persons may even ask to be the godparent of your child. Marriage sponsors are different, and choice is more carefully considered. Baptismal sponsors are sometimes considered first if they live nearby and if they are financially able. But preference is given to persons having relatively high social standing and influence in the

wider community. If a link of friendship or even distant kinship exists with one's landowner or, in the case of a small farmer or secure tenant, with an influential person in the poblacion, that person will be asked to be a sponsor. Sometimes where no friendship exists, it can be created by the mediation of a mutual friend of both. Interclass links are desired especially by the lower status persons concerned, but they are not very common between landowner and tenant. The *compadre* system in the poblacion functions quite differently from the *barrio* system. It has great importance in the hierarchy of political alliances. Extremes in personal attributes may, of course, affect all of the above status considerations.

Marriage—Marriage partners in the *barrio* are chosen, whether by parents or by an individual, to a great extent with an eye for equivalent or higher status. Female informants may even state, "So and so could not reach my price." The institution of *salonson* (formal marriage proposal) is purely a meeting for economic bargaining between parents before marriage plans are allowed to proceed further. The result is marriage within or near one's own status category. This is strongest in the higher statuses. There is social pressure against a man's marrying above his status, shown in the warning given such men that they may come "under the *saya*," (i.e., be henpecked). If men do not marry someone of their own status, the bride will usually come from the next status below.

Land plays an important part in marriage between *barrio* persons. A parcel of land usually forms the main portion of the bride gift (*dasel*), but is only one of several points which are bargained for during the *salonson*. A groom in the status group which holds land is dependent upon his parents to give him a piece of land with which he and his bride can begin married life. The *dasel* can be withheld from a son who does not behave as a proper son should. It can also be withheld as a final sanction against

his chosen bride, if the parents should not approve of her. This conjugal land also acts as a stabilizing influence in the marriage until children are born and the family is truly established.

Cousin marriage, particularly among first cousins, is sometimes practiced in an attempt by families to keep land holdings together. This is practiced both among small owners and medium land owners.

The age at marriage tells something about the status categories. Insecure tenants have the widest range of age at marriage for men. They marry as young as 15 and as old as 26 or after. That is, they either settle right down into farming and get married young or they try to make their fortune in Manila, seeking permanent employment there or elsewhere and, failing, they get married late and start farming. The average age of the other groups is about the same (age 23), although agricultural workers and the underemployed may get married very late, for the same reason cited above.

The stability of marriage also is related to the economic security of each family in the hierarchy of access to land. No marriages of small owners and secure tenants in the sample ended in desertion or separation. Only a small percentage of marriages of insecure tenants ended in desertion or separation. On the other hand, 15-20% of marriages of agricultural laborers and of those unskilled employed ended in desertions. Cases of illegitimacy and sexual promiscuity that I know about occurred almost solely among the agricultural laborers group. A case of incest also occurred in this group.

Elopedments are most common among those who are unskilled laborers, and among agricultural workers and the unemployed. They are relatively rare among small owners and secure tenants.

Lastly, common-law marriages are most common among agricultural workers and the unemployed, including almost half of such unions. Among unskilled employed

and insecure tenants, about 1/5 of the unions are common-law.

Residence—Residence after marriage defies easy classification. If I should be permitted to coin a term to be added to an already complex and confusing terminology for classifying residence, I would call it "optio-local," dependent upon an open option—a choice made by the married couple after surveying the resources of both of their families.⁵

In practice, for persons who inherit land to farm in the barrio, the choice of residence is quite clear. It will usually be near the largest portion of land which is in turn near the largest, most influential, and the most "loving" kin group of either bride or groom. This "love" is expressed partly in material advantage. In the case of others who reside in the barrio after the above kin consideration, choice is made after a consideration of the following: principally on the basis of where the best opportunity exists to get land to farm, where a house or a house site is available, how many siblings the couple has living nearby and whether the parents of either spouse require care. Generally, choice of residence is based upon the best alternative economic opportunity within a strong kin network although this may be modified by obligation to parents.

I would say that a wider range of determinants and a wider range of residence alternatives exist in this society than in most societies that are not strictly neolocal (i.e., with residence not determined mainly by ties of kinship). And this is what one would expect to find in a bilateral kinship system whose basic characteristic is over-all flexibility.

Kinship—Genealogies and observation of the kin who attend social events defined as important in the culture indicate that kinship is reckoned bilaterally, that is,

neither the father's side nor the mother's side is favored for a closer relationship. Genealogies are shallow and narrow (second ascending generation upwards and ordinarily only to second cousins laterally). I interpret these characteristics as revealing a present orientation in social relations and as revealing the importance of residence upon kinship. With regard to the latter, the residential propinquity of relatives is more important than the degree of kinship propinquity. Both these phenomena seem to indicate that when one needs his relatives he wants them near and he wants them now.

Bilaterality in this part-society is also expressed in equality of inheritance and in near equality of social privilege for the sexes. I would say that although equality between the sexes is itself an important principle in the social structure, expressed in an equalitarian allocation of social privilege and supported by the non-rigid sexual division of labor, it is the allocation of the right of landholding to both sexes which primarily reinforces the continuance of equalitarian social privilege.

Kinship is affected by the land in two other ways. There is some evidence from the genealogies that persons in the higher status categories recall more distant relatives (both in propinquity and in degree of relationship). These relatives turn out to have relatively high position or influence in the social structure. Or to put it in another way, you might say that higher status persons have more relatives worth remembering, that is, more relatives of "worth" as judged in the status system. The second factor is that although the kinship terminology and the system of expectations between relatives (which usually corresponds quite closely to the terms) is a guide for behavior, this expected behavior can be modified by the land. Thus in the mention previously made about friction between siblings over inheritance it can be said that the land intervenes to make brothers act unbrotherly toward each other.

⁵ See J. A. Barnes, "Marriage and Residential Continuity," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 62, No. 5 (October 1960), pp. 850-66.

There are a number of cases of this kind which modify the expected behavior between relatives. Land is one of the basic factors responsible for the disruptions of roles expected between relatives.

Religion—Persons high in the hierarchy of access to land play a more active role in lay religious leadership. This is just another expression in land. The medium landowners may validate their high status by taking an active role in supporting religious observances. A considerable proportion of these are Roman Catholics. They tend to take the most active roles in the circulation of images and in the feasts given in the block rosary. They also form the main support of the *Hijas de Maria*, the Holy Name Society, etc. They are the biggest contributors to the Church throughout the year but especially during the fiestas when they contribute for the masses.

Within the barrio, the small owners and secure tenants assume a comparable role on a reduced scale. If there are block rosary images in the barrio, they will be the ones to keep the images. They take the most active part in organizing the novenas and the procession for the annual sitio *santakrusan*. However, with regard to religious affiliations at the barrio level, there does not seem to be any significant correlation with the status categories. Most families in all categories are Roman Catholics. They have no chapel in the barrio, but three other sects have small chapels, the Iglesia ni Cristo, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of the Nazarene. Membership in each of these groups seems to come from all status categories.

Conclusions

I said at the beginning of this paper that many of my remarks would be tentative. I cannot therefore end this paper with any broad conclusions, for I feel at this point of the research that I am just beginning to ask the important questions. I can, however, make some summary remarks which

may indicate some of the broader implications of the findings presented. This then is a worm's eye view of some major Philippine social and economic problems. I must state, however, that at this stage these attempts to place local findings in a broader context are based mainly on impressions which still require testing. For this reason I would set this section off from the previous sections of the paper which have a more solid basis in objectivity.

Population growth is causing the number of small owners, tenants, agricultural laborers, and underemployed in the rural areas to grow. The farms of both small owners and tenants continue to get smaller, even though they are already too small to support their families properly. They are so small that they are inefficient in producing adequate yields. Production is mainly geared for subsistence. The heavy non-farming population pressure in the rural areas is an important factor in distribution which reinforces the subsistence character of the rural economy. Though not absolutely essential as labor, non-farming harvesters are permitted by custom to share in the harvest of crops so that they too may live. That this custom is inefficient and wasteful is tolerated under the present subsistence-oriented system.

Small farm size and low agricultural production are linked in two other ways. In the first place, crop production is under the present technology and land use, insufficient to support the family entirely. Family members must all take up subsidiary subsistence and income producing activities which in turn take time and energy from farm work. In a system of better market incentives, this time and energy might be spent in the additional labor that it takes to perform the technological innovations which would increase yields. In the second place, on such small farms, even if increased production were accepted in theory, farm families cannot accumulate enough capital to make important improvements or to invest in fertilizers sufficient to have a significant effect upon

yields. Already living a marginal existence, most farm families are unwilling to sacrifice anymore in consumption in order to take a chance that increased yields will result. For the tenant, increasing yields or improving the land is not worth his additional efforts anyway because he still gets only half of the product. What is the use of producing for someone else's consumption? Furthermore, what little capital most small owners and tenants can accumulate over basic family consumption needs is not reinvested in farm development. It is spent mainly in the form of tuition fees for the education of their children so that they may have a chance to raise their status in the social system which lies outside the barrio. I have found that the two main causes for mortgaging land in the barrio under study are for educational fees and for the celebration of life crisis events, particularly marriage, funerals, and memorial ceremonies.

In such a system as I have been describing, it is purely a pipedream to think that the Philippines is going, somehow, to become a land of small owner-operators and that small farmers will naturally be encouraged to take steps to increase agricultural production. The trend is rather in the reverse direction, despite any land reform legislation to date. The way things are, with rare exceptions the only persons who can accumulate enough capital to buy land are those who do not want to farm it. They are persons looking for a secure investment or for speculation. Migration to the frontier areas does not seem to provide an easy solution for those who want to create new farms. Some of the best farmers in the barrio under study have failed for one reason or another to establish homesteads in Isabela and Palawan. Small landowner-developers need more protection and encouragement than they are getting at present.

Given the relatively large proportion of the rural population which contributes only in a small way to agricultural production and yet sustains itself within the barrio,

and given too the already heavy and yet increasing pressure on the land of cultivators alone, it is obvious that the Philippine economy must develop more non-farm employment. The mass of the population can no longer be supported on the farms. A well conceived program for industrialization which will increase opportunities for employment is called for.

But along with it, I believe that the biggest single stimulation to agricultural production, to increasing rural income, to creating employment in the rural areas, and to uplifting rural life generally in the immediate future, would be the creation of a fair and efficient system of marketing agricultural and craft products. The farmer is already bound firmly within the market economy. And yet he produces little for the national and international market because of the poor returns and lack of positive incentives offered within the present unfair and inefficient system of marketing. The middlemen are legion and they are all taking their cut from both the producer and the consumer. The farmer is caught in the middle of such a system for he cannot produce enough for his subsistence. He must sell part of his production when the price is lowest in order to get cash for consumer purchasing, and yet he must buy part of it back when the prices are highest, at five to seven times his sale price. A fair system of marketing, market education and information including dissemination of research on marketable agricultural and craft products, will provide the incentive to greater production.

I am convinced that farmers will be willing to pay the price necessary to increase production by reorganizing their present system of expenditure of time and energy. Agricultural cooperatives which will really work may be one answer to providing fairer marketing for they will give the actual producers an economic and political voice to protect their interests. The failure of the Farmers Cooperative Marketing Administration (Facoma) program is a

failure to recognize that the large and medium landowning upper class, who came to control most Facomas, and the producing lower class have different interests.

Concurrent with the development of improved marketing there must be provided a workable credit system which will reach down to tenants who most need such a system but have never had one. A fair and efficient marketing system, suitable credit facilities, an expanded program of research into improved agricultural technology and improved varieties of crops for the Philippines, and an expanded program of dissemination are the basic ingredients of a dynamic program for rural improvements.

Flood control, irrigation, and hydroelectric power projects are also fundamental in providing more productive potential. The first two vastly expand the productive potential of agricultural land by allowing double and triple cropping. The third provides relatively inexpensive power for small manufacturing and rural electrification.

Aside from the need for improved marketing facilities, what has been most impressed upon me so far in my study, and I must add again that this has been from my experience in only one municipality, is that agricultural tenancy in itself is not necessarily the bogey for all the ills of the rural areas. In so far as it perpetuates vast economic and social inequalities it hampers economic development. But with transition from share-cropping to leaseholding under moderate rents, much of the present inequality would be removed and the farmer could begin to practice real management of his enterprise. Even under the traditional tenancy system that I have described, tenants are somewhat economically and socially better off than agricultural la-

borers and the non-agricultural unemployed or underemployed. They have a certain margin of security provided by their reciprocal relationship with small and medium landowners; this is lacking under the absentee system. Tenants under the traditional system seem willing to put up with its injustices in return for this compensating security. They may not readily give up these advantages without a significant gain in income which could compensate them for their loss of this security. One of the unanticipated results of the Agricultural Tenancy Act has been to destroy the traditional system which existed between tenants and small and medium owners in the areas of acute tenancy, without accomplishing the primary goal of improving tenant-landlord relations on the large haciendas. Attacking further the system which continues to provide some compensations for the tenant in areas of small and medium holdings, without any plan to help provide tenants with some means to carry out functions previously assumed by landowners, may only create greater social unrest. It would seem wiser to concentrate upon the acute problems inherent in the large absentee haciendas and plantations. It is there that tenants and also agricultural laborers really require protection. In the areas of non-acute or semi-acute tenancy it would seem advisable to concentrate more in the immediate future upon marketing and toward policies which would lead to the evolution of farms of a more efficient size. I would hypothesize that under the traditional tenancy system where holdings are small or even medium in size, more exploitation of both the small owners and tenants and greater hindrance to increased production results from the marketing and credit apparatus than from the tenancy system.