



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**SOCIAL CHANGE IN AN UPLAND COMMUNITY IN QUEZON,  
PHILIPPINES**

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SOCIAL CHANGE IN AN UPLAND COMMUNITY IN  
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by

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This study attempts to describe and analyze social change in an upland community in Quezon Province, Philippines, through the analysis of changing agricultural systems and its effect on social differentiation and stratification.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze and compare the agricultural systems of an upland community in the early 1970s and 1980s; and
2. To discuss the allocation of income, power and privileges as the agricultural systems of an upland community change.



The study was conducted in Barangay San Roque, Catanauan, Quezon Province. Data were gathered through interviews by using prepared interview schedules. These were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

During the early 1970s to 1980s, San Roque experienced changing agricultural systems. Farming methods which were formerly oriented towards subsistence production gradually gave way to more commercial methods of production. Subsistence farming with rice, corn and root crops decreased in importance as farmers learned to cultivate commercial crops such as bananas, coconut, fruit trees and coffee. An increasing number of farmers began to practise mixed cropping with perennial crops.

Within the same period of time, the agricultural systems in San Roque changed from fire agriculture to hoe culture, then to plow, and finally to permanent agriculture. There was a corresponding change in farm tools and implements used. Traditional tools like machete, axe, crowbar and hoe or shovel were replaced by the plow in preparing land for cultivation.

Social differentiation and stratification were noted in the community as a consequence of the changing agricultural systems. For instance, equality in social position, the prevailing condition in the early 1970s no longer existed in



the 1980s. By 1983, there were some households which were better-off than others.

Another feature of the changing agricultural systems was the proliferation of hired labour. As more farmers began to use loans and avail themselves of modern agricultural inputs, a commercialized type of agriculture was ushered into this once economically dormant community. In the 80s, some farmers were engaged in hauling, marketing and transportation services- occupational roles which were virtually unknown in the 1970s.



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Kajian ini cuba memperihail dan menganalisis perubahan sosial di kalangan sebuah komuniti di kawasan tinggi di Negeri Quezon, Filipina, melalui analisis perubahan sistem pertanian serta kesannya ke atas perbezaan dan susunlapis sosial.

Khususnya, objektif-objektif kajian ini adalah seperti berikut:

1. Untuk menganalisis dan membandingkan sistem-sistem pertanian komuniti di kawasan tinggi di antara awal 70-an dan 80-an; dan
2. Untuk membincangkan agihan pendapatan, kuasa dan peluang-peluang istimewa apabila sistem pertanian komuniti kawasan tinggi berubah.



Kajian ini dijalankan di Kampung San Roque, Catanauan, Negeri Quezon. Data telah dikumpul melalui temubual dengan menggunakan jadual temubual yang disediakan. Data telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan hitungan kekerapan dan peratusan.

Di antara awal tahun 70-an dan 80-an, San Roque telah mengalami perubahan dalam sistem pertaniannya. Secara perlahan-lahan kaedah-kaedah pengeluaran berbentuk komersial mengambil tempat kaedah-kaedah pertanian yang awal, yang berorientasikan pengeluaran sara-diri. Pertanian sara-diri yang melibatkan tanaman padi, jagung dan tanaman-tanaman berubi menjadi kurang penting apabila petani-petani mula menanam tanaman-tanaman komersial seperti pisang, kelapa, pokok buah-buahan, dan kopi. Ada peningkatan bilangan petani yang mula mencampurkan tanaman-tanaman komersial mereka.

Dalam jangka masa yang sama sistem pertanian di San Roque juga berubah daripada pertanian 'bakar' kepada budaya cangkul, kemudian kepada tenggala, dan akhirnya kepada pertanian tetap. Selari dengan itu berlaku perubahan di dalam peralatan pertanian yang digunakan. Alat-alat tradisional seperti parang, kapak, alat penggali dan cangkul atau penyodok telah diambil alih oleh tenggala dalam menyediakan tanah untuk tanaman.

Perbezaan dan susunlapis sosial dapat diperhatikan wujud dalam komuniti akibat perubahan dalam sistem pertanian.





Misalnya persamaan kedudukan sosial, keadaan yang wujud pada awal 70-an tidak lagi wujud dalam tahun 80-an. Menjelang tahun 1983, beberapa keluarga telah menjadi lebih baik keadaannya daripada yang lain.

Satu ciri lain sistem pertanian yang telah berubah ialah kemasukan tenaga buruh yang dibayar. Dengan bertambahnya petani-petani yang menggunakan pinjaman dan input pertanian moden, satu bentuk pertanian yang bercorak komersial mula berkembang di dalam komuniti ini yang dari segi ekonomi dulunya agak beku. Dalam tahun-tahun 80-an, petani-petani mula terlibat dalam perkhidmatan-perkhidmatan mengangkut dan memasarkan barang-barang serta perkhidmatan-perkhidmatan pengangkutan - kerja-kerja yang tidak pernah wujud dalam tahun-tahun 70-an.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In agriculture, man has a close relationship with nature. His activities are directed by curiosity as to how nature works (Boeringa, 1980:2). These activities include his thoughts and skill, articulated in words and in actions using tools, domesticated plants and animals, all set within a particular environmental milieu. As a consequence of such activities, man establishes a particular way and type of farming, called agricultural system.

Agricultural systems follow the rhythm of the season, and although they may change through time, they constitute the critical functional linkage for survival between society and environment. Most, if not all societies, seek more than survival. Alternative choices of production are weighed; alternative techniques are selected to cope with survival and ultimately desires beyond simple sustenance. Primitive agricultural systems produce crops mainly for food to feed the farmers' households, whereas advanced agricultural systems produce crops mainly for the market. Furthermore, primitive agricultural systems use less capital and labour. Oftentimes, the farmers' desire beyond simple sustenance cannot be satisfied under primitive agricultural system. Apparently, the



levels and standards of living of people are higher where the agricultural systems are advanced, and lower where the agricultural systems are primitive. As Smith and Zopf (1970:213) state:

"... the differences in the systems of agriculture practiced by different peoples are the key to understanding of the ways in which the widely varying levels and standards of living were generated and perpetuated."

Over a period of time, agricultural systems change from a primitive to a more advanced one. The rate of change varies among farmers. This variation is due to the differences in people's activities in evaluating their environmental milieu. Consequently, agricultural systems vary between continents, countries, regions of countries and more importantly, communities. The existence of two types of agricultural systems at the same time and location will result in consequences serious enough to bring about differentiation in income, power and privileges, such that those who possess more of these attributes occupy better positions in the community.

This process of differentiation creates new roles and positions in the community, thereby, altering the pattern of relationships. This phenomenon is called social change.



### Statement of the Problem

Some of the upland farmers in the Philippines are generally subsistence-oriented during their initial years of farming. However, with the passing of time, they generally change their farming activities from subsistence to commercial crops. For them, it is a natural process dictated by their environment. Very often, this change is also enhanced by factors such as the policies of the government which may encourage the production of commercial crops, and the growing use of money as a means of exchange. But the change from subsistence to commercial crops does not occur evenly throughout the community. Some of the farmers are more innovative than others. Consequently, the innovators are able to generate more income, more privileges and power than their counterparts whose agricultural production remains at subsistence level. The uneven development brings about socio-economic differentiation and stratification in a previously undifferentiated farming community.

San Roque, one of the upland communities in Quezon, Philippines, is a peasant community. Primitive agricultural activities in the area started in 1960. Like other rural areas in the Philippines, San Roque had increasingly experienced a process of change especially since the year 1970. Obvious manifestations of development toward a more advanced agricultural systems and the growing disparities in the possession of community's social resources among the residents



had been observed. Since the beginning of 1970, farmers had been selectively, actively and voluntarily altering their way of life so as to accommodate themselves into institutions and activities in which they were embedded. That was the time when their environment had changed, their population increased, and the government became very active in rural development programs. Rural development had brought about technology and capital in the form of loans to the rural areas, thus exposing San Roque to new forms of institutions and activities from outside.

The basic questions that this research seeks to answer are the following: (1) What was the nature of the agricultural systems of an upland community in its early stage of development? (2) In the process of change in the agricultural systems, what were the consequences it brought about on the distribution of income, power and privileges among the San Roque farmers?

#### Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to describe and analyze social change in an upland community in Quezon Province, Philippines, through the analysis of the changing agricultural systems and its effect on social differentiation and stratification.



Specifically, the objectives are as follows:

1. To analyze and compare the agricultural systems of an upland community in the early 1970s and 1980s; and
2. To discuss the allocation of income, power and privileges as the agricultural systems change.

#### Limitations of the Study

The study was a longitudinal one. In the absence of any written record about the state of agricultural systems as well as the allocation of income, power and privileges in 1970, the researcher relied heavily on the use of retrospection of the respondents. Although the study covered two time periods, 1970 and 1983, information gathered were generalized to represent events in the 70's and 80's.

Agricultural systems as well as social change are broad concepts. However, in this particular study the former was taken to refer to types and ways of farming with incipient ownership of farm tools and implements. The latter concept was confined only to the alteration on the distribution of income, power and privileges.

This study focussed on one specific upland community. The findings of the study cannot be used to generalize upland communities in the Philippines. Each upland community should be treated as a unique entity.



### Importance of the Study

In the 1980's, the main thrust of development programs in the Philippines was to develop upland agriculture. This is because, despite the fact that upland farmers occupy 55 percent of the nation's land and constitute more than one-third of the population (Cruz, 1985), they do not contribute in the same proportions to the economic development of the country (Carner, 1981:56; Conelly, 1982:56). In rice production alone, their yield is 78 per cent lower than the national average. Therefore, there is a strong necessity to develop upland agriculture. If government development programs are to be successful, indepth knowledge on upland agricultural systems is needed. However, studies on the nature of these agricultural systems are wanting, hence, this study.

In the realm of social change, this study is important because it has documented the emerging inequality in income, power and privileges as the agricultural systems changed. This study is all the more significant especially when farmers have "equal opportunities" - or at least their opportunity to participate or change their agricultural systems were as equal as one could expect. That they did not take advantage of these circumstances is a matter of considerable interest and significance.

