

# **The Logic of Rice Farming: An Ethnography of a Farming Village in Mindanao, Philippines**

Nomer C. Esmero  
SEARCA, UPLB, Laguna  
26 September 2017

# What is it?

- ▶ Stories of farmers
- ▶ My personal encounter
- ▶ Analysis of a social order

# The Thesis

The disconnect between the state and the village perpetuates poverty in the farming community.

# Methodology

- ▶ Initial knowledge: reports
- ▶ Being a farmer
- ▶ Ethnography using FGDs; journals; key informant interviews and informal conversations
- ▶ Conference with degree adviser and colleagues

# The research site



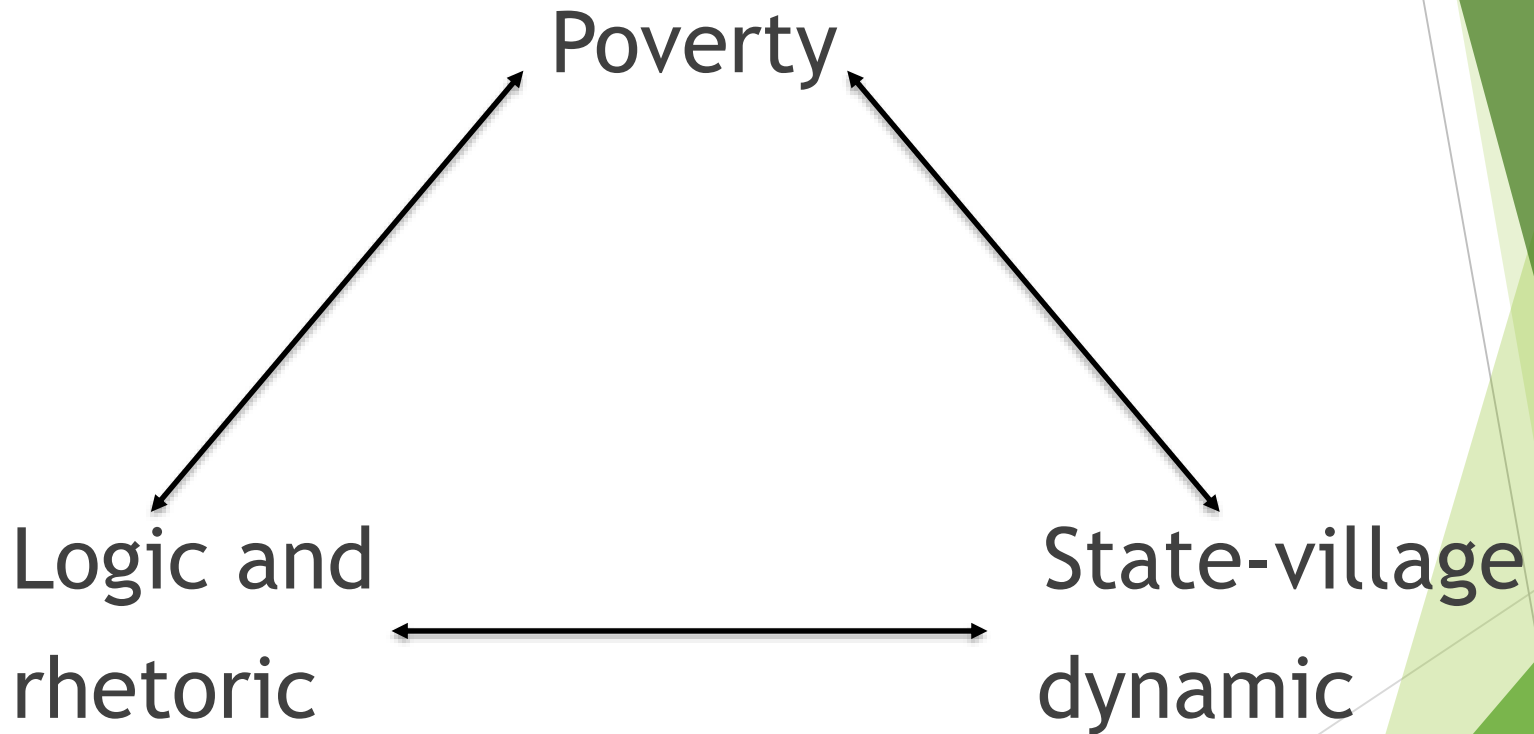
# The research site



# The research site

- ▶ A farming village in Butuan City (HUC)
- ▶ 1 of the 86 barangays, with 3 sub-villages (sitios)
- ▶ Most (74%) of the population are farmers
- ▶ More traditional with less minimal mechanization
- ▶ Socially and environmentally challenged community

# Points of Conversation



**TRIAD**



# On Poverty

## ▶ Material/Welfare

1. Access road
2. Unsafe water
3. Threat of schistosomiasis
4. High rate of school dropouts

# On Poverty

## ► Structural

1. Experience of flood (loss at many levels)
2. Lost opportunity for democracy

Pressing question

Is rice farming logical?

Or

Why plant rice?

# The Logic

- ▶ Rice farming as a household economic enterprise
- ▶ Land as a perpetual resource
- ▶ Rice as currency for exchange/commercial good
- ▶ The need for infrastructure

# The Logic

- ▶ Rice farming as a reflection of a social order
  - Power arrangements
  - An issue of social capital
  - It then becomes an issue of empowerment

# The Rhetoric

- ▶ Agricultural modernisation
- ▶ Rice self-sufficiency

# State-village dynamics

- ▶ State as agent of socio-economic change
  - State sets the agenda
  - State controls the resources
  - State performs self-checks

# State-village dynamics

- ▶ 2 views of the State:
  - Separate, autonomous entity
  - State as the ‘embodiment’ of society
  
- ▶ Challenge: the equilibrium and how to get there



# State-village dynamics

- ▶ The dilemma of dual transition
  - Fixing the system
  - Go for the gold

# Way forward

- ▶ Foucault's view on government
- ▶ Parsons' view of power