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

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What is it?

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

Poverty

Logic and rhetoric

State-village dynamic

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