

An analysis of the Agrarian Reform in Honduras: Its Historical Aspects after the Conflict between El Salvador and Honduras

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*Agrarian Reform in Honduras was initiated in 1962 by the enactment of the Agrarian Reform Law and establishment of the **Instituto Nacional Agrario (INA)**, however, the land redistribution did not proceed. Discontent among landless peasants grew gradually. The Conflict between El Salvador and Honduras that erupted in 1969 left many inhabitants expelled from the border zone, leaving the Honduran society in confusion. The military seized power in a coup d'état, and initiated policies called "Military Reformism". Landless peasants formed peasant groups and began to struggle for land. Many peasant groups carried out land occupations to require land redistribution of the INA. The results of a survey of peasant groups in Nueva Arcadia, a municipality in the Occident Region, and demographic data of the domestic population movement show that Agrarian Reform contributed to stabilizing the social disruption after the conflict. This suggests an alternative to resolutions of social problems in developing countries.*

1 Introduction

In recent years, the Republic of Honduras in Central America is well known for its cruel social indices. The number of homicides reached 14 victims a day in 2015.¹ The worst five municipalities in which more homicides occurred were: the Central District, the area including the capital Tegucigalpa, its annual homicide number reached 873, San Pedro Sula, the commercial city called "Second Capital", 822, Choloma, 220, La Ceiba, 214 and in El Progreso, 176. These are all major populated cities of this country. Obviously, behind the public security problems like homicides, there is an excess concentration of population in urban areas and a serious social divide. In the Central District

1 La Prensa, February 17, 2016.

1,084.0 thousand of 1,190.2 thousand inhabitants live in the urban area and its urban population rate is over 91.0%. In San Pedro Sula, 700.8 thousand of 742.1 thousand live in the urban area and its urban population rate is over 94.4%. These rates are extremely high compared with the national average of 53.9%.² The Gini coefficient, the index number that reflects the degree of income inequality, reached 53.7 in 2013.³ The social economic divide is observed not only in the income distribution but also in industrial sectors. In agriculture, a traditionally important industry in Honduras, a large productivity gap exists between small farming oriented to the production of basic grain and large-scale estates oriented to export agriculture, and this gap is the so called “dual structure”.

But this social situation could not have been predicted 50 years ago. An old Honduran says that, until the 1960s, they could enjoy a safe life even in the capital down town. So, what has brought this situation to this country?

Honduras, by the end of the 1980s, had an external debt of more than 3.7 billion (3,700 million) dollars, this amounted to 120% of GDP in 1990; therefore, Honduran Government had to introduce structural adjustment policies to focus on the macro economy along with suggestions from the Agency for International Development of United States (USAID) and the World Bank. Concurrently increasingly rapid globalization accelerated the change of policies toward the market economy. This trend is of course known as Neoliberalism and it covered all socio-economic sectors of the country.

In the agriculture sector, a new law, *Ley para modernización y desarrollo del sector agrícola* (Law for the Modernization and Development of the Agriculture Sectors), was enacted in 1992. Public assistance was reduced and the privatization of the public sector was carried forward. Also, this law had a provision to amend a part of the *Ley de Reforma Agraria* (Agrarian Reform Law). By the enforcement of this law, the Agrarian Reform of Honduras was substantially completed. From that time to the present, the *Instituto Nacional Agraria* (INA: National Agrarian Institute), the institution which had enforced the Agrarian Reform, has promoted land registrations.

The Agrarian Reform in Honduras began with the legislation of the Agrarian Reform Law and establishment of the INA in 1962 to implement the law.

Agrarian questions in the period before the Law for the Modernization and Development of the Agriculture sectors in Honduras have been studied by several analysts. Kenneth H. Parsons studied the aspects of the cooperatives of the reformed sector in the south of Honduras,⁴ Andy Thorpe advocated the role of the Agrarian Reform in the rural development,⁵ Williams pointed out that a vertical integration of the beef-export business ex-

2 Banco Central de Honduras, 2007

3 World Bank, 2016.

4 Persons, 1975.

5 Thorpe, 1991.

pelled the peasants to the marginal territory⁶ and Ishii gave a positive evaluation to the Agrarian Reform for promoting social stability in the decade of the 1980s, during the epoch of the conflicts in Central America.⁷

On the other hand, the National Census of Agriculture does not show statistically that the reformed sector has advantages in the improvement of productivity that was expected in Agrarian Reform. It is said that Agrarian Reform has ended in failure from the viewpoint of emphasizing the market economy.

However, in this article, I would like to try to discuss the meaning of Agrarian Reform in Honduras through an analysis of the Agrarian Reform and the peasant groups organized in the Municipality of Nueva Arcadia in the Department of Copan, in the Occident Region of the country, after the Conflict between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969.

2 The brave history of the Agrarian Reform and peasant groups

Historically, the first precedents of peasant groups arose in the late 1920s.⁸ Nevertheless, at national level, the rural organizations for the struggle for land began to form along with the expansion of export agriculture after the Second World War. In 1961, unemployed workers of the banana plantations who were stimulated by the Cuban Revolution in 1959, organized the *Comité Central de Unificación Campesina* (Central Committee of Peasant Unification), and the next year they changed their name to *Federación Nacional de Campesinos de Honduras* (FENACH: National Peasant Federation of Honduras). In opposition to this, the *Asociación Nacional de Campesinos de Honduras* (ANACH: National Peasant Association of Honduras) was organized under the lead of the *Federación de Sindicato de Trabajadores del Norte de Honduras* (Federation of Labor Unions of Northern Honduras) supported by AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) from an anti-communist perspective. The impact of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 was quite critical to other countries in Latin America.

The Organization of American States (OAS) organized the “Alliance for Progress” and, in 1961, proposed the Agrarian Reform to prevent a chain reaction from the Cuban Revolution. In Honduras, the Agrarian Reform Law was legislated in 1962, with the purpose of redistributing national land; *ejidos* and other forms of public lands to the landless peasants and the INA was founded as its implementing agency.

The redistribution of land was carried out in three ways as follows;

6 Williams, 1986.

7 Ishii, 1991.

8 Lombraña, 1989.

- 1) to colonize landless peasants in the colonies founded by the government,
- 2) to approve usufruct on the national land or *ejidal* (common land of the municipality) in which the peasants have been cultivating traditionally,
- 3) to award national land, *ejidal*, *fiscal* (property of local averment) or expropriated private land to the entities associated by the landless peasants.

Those who are known as entities in the latter process of 3) are the *grupos campesinos* (peasant groups).

The Law intended to expropriate the land tenure of more than 50 ha but the Agrarian Reform of the time had not practically proceeded the act. Because of this, a critical discontent grew among the peasants, in 1968, they organized the Unión Nacional de Campesinos (UNC: National Union of Peasants).

In July, 1969, the Conflict between El Salvador and Honduras broke out. This Conflict is known as the “Soccer War”, because it happened after the qualification match for the World Cup, but the fact was that it was caused by the socio-economic disequilibrium between the two states that had increased since the inauguration of *Mercado Común Centroamericano* (Central American Common Market). The Conflict caused social confusion. In Honduras, some military personnel came to have sympathy for the peasants who supported soldiers during the Conflict, and formed a reformist group inside the military. In the December of 1972, they seized power in a coup d’état, when ANACH led a massive march of peasants to the capital. This military government immediately published Decree No. 8 to reactivate land redistribution and initiated a series of policies called “Military Reformism”. It was established based on the traditions of “*caudillismo*”, clientelism and patronage politics intrinsic to the development of the political system in Honduras.⁹

The peasant groups, supported by the national peasant organizations like ANACH, UNC and others, who demanded INA to encourage the land redistribution, waged land occupation, and tried to leave cultivation facts which were required for claiming the redistribution of land. When the peasant groups occupied the land, the INA played the role of mediator between the peasants and the landowners for the expropriation of the properties. For the peasant groups, land occupation, though involving risks, was an efficient way to obtain land.

In 1974, the Military Reformism Government amended the Agrarian Reform Law; in its amendment the limit of the extension of land tenure had been decided, taking the local conditions of each area into account. The INA continuously carried out expropriations for some part of the cultivated fields of banana plantations operated by multinational companies. The extension of the lands awarded in the four years of the Military Reformism from 1972 to 1975 corresponded to approximately 40% of the total extension of land awarded

9 Sieder, 1995.

for 30 years from 1962, the year of the Agrarian Reform Law enactment, to 1992, the year of the Law for the Modernization and Development of the Agriculture Sectors enactment. In the land awarding procedure, the INA only awarded the peasant groups with the facts of cultivation “*dominio útil*”, usufruct for the lands, and didn’t award “*dominio pleno*”, full occupancy rights on property of the lands, in order to prevent the resale of the lands. But in many cases of peasant groups, although they had not completed the required term of more than 10 years of cultivation, the INA had actually awarded the usufruct to them. And in cases of familiar agricultural units with the term of more than 10 years of practical cultivation, the INA acknowledged the registration as their property under the conditions of the groups paying for the land. These groups and units that were awarded the lands are called “beneficiaries”.

In the 1960s, the peasants in the reformed sectors were encouraged to organize themselves as *Cooperativas Campesinas* (Rural Cooperatives). These Cooperatives were to be formed with more than 20 associates to qualify for legal status, and had very similar attributes to other types of cooperatives under the jurisdiction of the *Secretaría de Economía* (Economy Secretary). The first Rural Cooperative organized in the reformed sector was the *Cooperativa Guanchías Limitada* founded in 1965. Nevertheless, unlike the target of this politics, the cooperative system had gradually developed characteristics resembling those of enterprises, using external labor force and concentrating on cultivation of commercial products. At this point the Cooperatives could not be taken into consideration as a model of the reformed sector.

Hence, the INA had to introduce a new concept, *Empresas Asociativas Campesinas* (EAC: Rural Associative Companies) as a substitute of the Cooperatives moderating the requisites to form a Rural Corporation. The EACs are under the jurisdiction of the INA and are organized with more than 5 associates. The EAC was supposed to strengthen the cooperation among the peasantry, and to grant legal status to all peasant groups.

Even after the transference of power to civil government in 1982, many peasant groups continued to take direct actions for the land, but the land occupation was forbidden by a law dubbed “*Anti Terrorista*” and the principal project of the INA shifted to promoting the registration of land awarded to the peasants.

As mentioned in the introduction, in the decade of the 1980s, an economic crisis occurred and the government, according to the recommendations proposed by the Agency for International Development and the World Bank, set out on a course of structural adjustment policies. Also, in the agriculture sector, the Law for the Modernization and Development of the Agriculture Sector, a new framework of agro politics, was enacted in the National Congress in March, 1992. This law aimed to reduce the role of the government in the agricultural sector and to encourage agriculture to function in the market economy, providing priority to the macro economy. Further, the law includes some modifications of the Agrarian Reform Law and tries to put the lands of the reformed sector under the market mechanism for the efficient use of lands by proceeding the land registra-

tion of the beneficiaries. By 1993, the land awarded by the INA had been fulfilled to 2,768 peasant groups, the total extension of the awarded lands reaching to 426,159 ha,¹⁰ which corresponds to 12.8% of all the extensions of agricultural land of 3,337,080.3 ha.

Here we will try to analyze the Agrarian Reform in terms of agricultural production. We see, in the comparison between the First National Census of Agricultural in 1952 and IV National Census of Agriculture in 1993, the number of small farms of less than 5 ha has increased, on the other hand the number of middle-sized farms of 5-20 ha and larger farms of more than 500 ha have decreased. This shows a certain result of land redistribution. Also the differences in the productivity among the different production scales have been noticeable. For example, of the basic grains like maize and kidney beans, the ratio of small producers less than 5 ha in the maize production diminished from 39% to 35.3 %, however the occupancy ratio in the number of producers increased from 55.8% to 63.2%. The land redistribution by the Agrarian Reform did not lead necessarily to the improvement of productivity. Before then, it was expected that small farming would have higher land productivity rather than high labor productivity, because small producers could concentrate on their work force and utilize it more efficiently. And this assertion was taken as one of the reasons for the land redistribution by the Agrarian Reform. However, the current perspective points out that the differences in land productivity had grown between large and small farming. This disparity was caused by the differences in the approaches on how the lands were used. There was a tendency of small producers continuing to work in traditional farming methods; they neither used hybrid cultivars seeds that were used in larger farming nor bought fertilizer or pesticides.

3 The peasant groups in the Municipality of Nueva Arcadia

In this section we will see some examples of the beneficiaries of the Agrarian Reform.

Until 1993, the year of the inurement of the Law for Modernization and Development in the Agriculture Sectors, the existence of 40 peasant groups was confirmed by the INA in the jurisdiction of Nueva Arcadia (**Table 1**). Their approximate distributions are shown in the configuration map with altitude (**Figure 1**).

Nueva Arcadia is one of the municipalities of the Department (prefecture) of Copan in the Occident Region, and is placed 100 km south-west of San Pedro Sula. The main area of this municipality, La Entrada, is an intersection of the main highways leading to Guatemala and El Salvador. The municipal jurisdiction occupies the major part of the Venta Valley, formed by the Chamelecón River and the embattled mountains. The municipality has 13 villages and 83 hamlets, and its population amounted to about 20,000 persons in that age.

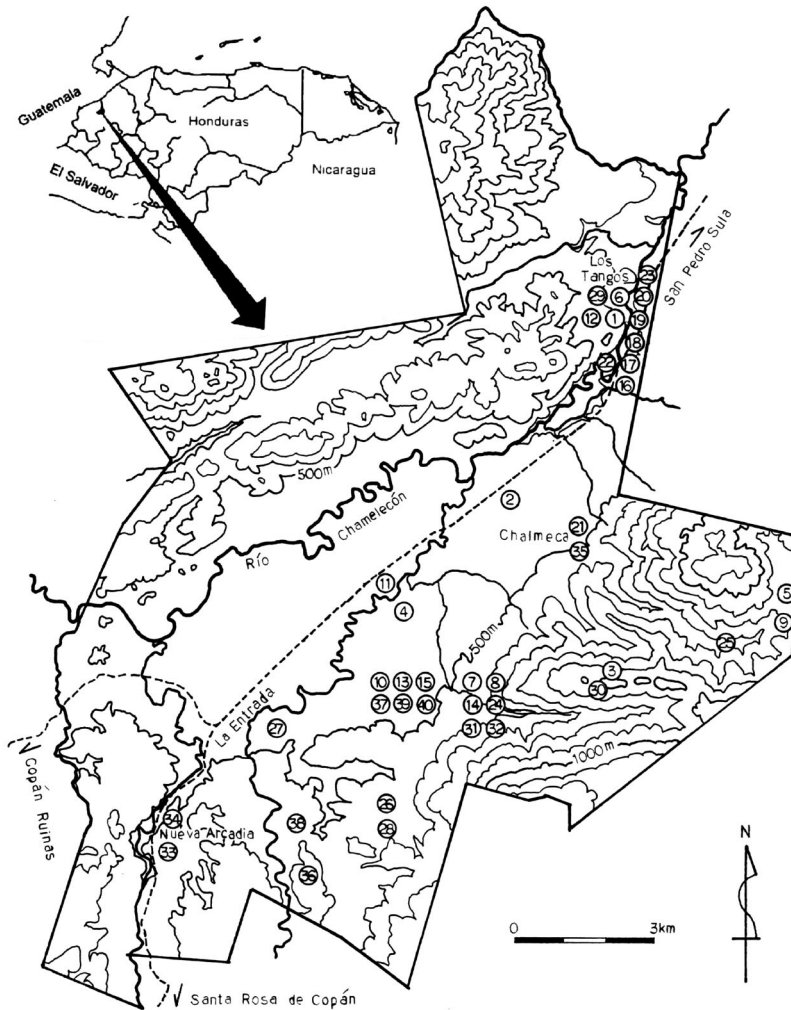
10 Instituto Nacional Agrario, 1994.

Table 1 Peasant groups in Nueva Arcadia

#	J.P.	group name	extension	awarded date	cultivated extension	number of associates	affiliated organization
1	EAC	Tangos #1 El Esfuerzo	118	09/11/1967	118	62	ANACH
2	EAC	El Progreso	20	08/05/1971	20	10	Independ.
3	EAC	Cuchilla Zapa #1	53	13/12/1972	53	13	UNC
4	EAC	El Dorado	49	05/10/1975	49	13	ANACH
5	EAC	El Cedral #1*	56	01/05/1976	56	23	ANACH
6	Sttl.	Brisas de Chamelecón #2	91	06/05/1977	90	10	FECORAH
7	EAC	Nueva Idea	35	23/05/1977	31	22	ALCONH
8	EAC	Nueva Vida	12	26/05/1977	11	9	ALCONH
9	EAC	El Cedral #2*	153	05/07/1978	125	40	ANACH
10	EAC	Suyapa ANACH #2	49	10/04/1979	49	28	ANACH
11	EAC	Juan Benito Montoya	79	26/10/1979	79	24	ACAN
12	no	Tangos #3 Las Colinas	39	08/11/1979	28	17	ANACH
13	EAC	Tepemechín	21	20/02/1981	21	18	UNC
14	EAC	Brisas #2	14	20/02/1981	14	9	UNC
15	EAC	El Carmen	15	13/02/1981	15	11	UNC
16	EAC	La Fortuna	18	18/05/1981	17	16	ALCONH
17	EAC	Unión y Fuerza Tangos #5	13	27/05/1981	13	17	ALCONH
18	EAC	Nueva Esperanza	5	27/05/1981	5	8	ALCONH
19	EAC	La Agrícola	16	27/05/1981	16	14	ALCONH
20	EAC	El Milagro	16	27/05/1981	16	16	UNC
21	EAC	Flores de Mayo	122	27/05/1981	56	36	ALCONH
22	no	Tangos #2	94	05/06/1981	94	23	ANACH
23	EAC	El Sembrador (Tangos #4)	25	27/07/1981	25	26	Independ.
24	EAC	Quebrada Seca	78	20/12/1981	56	42	ANACH
25	no	Fuerza de Camp. de Recpe.	10	30/06/1982	10	15	ANACH
26	no	El Gavilan #2	23	02/08/1984	23	11	ANACH
27	EAC	Suyapa Independiente	350	13/04/1985	350	59	Independ.
28	EAC	San Pablo Roble	5	08/07/1985	5	12	ANACH
29	no	Tangos #3 Las Champas	18	08/08/1985	18	18	ANACH
30	no.	Ivan Betancourt	26	18/08/1985	26	6	UNC
31	no.	Chalmeca #2	10	10/05/1986	10	13	UNC
32	EAC	Brisas #1	84	14/05/1986	42	12	UNC
33	no	Los Llanitos	7	25/09/1986	7	10	FECORAH
34	EAC	Los Laureles	14	17/09/1987	14	12	UNC
35	EAC	Juventud #6	24	08/08/1988	24	6	FECORAH
36	EAC	Venceremos	84	11/03/1991	84	19	ANACH
37	no	Siete de Maya(Brisas #3)	—	—	—	—	UNC
38	no	CAUL(Jigua #2)	—	—	—	—	Independ.
39	no	Los Ángeles #1	—	—	—	—	ANACH
40	no.	Jardín Quebrada Seca	—	—	—	—	—

source: INA (1995) and some information added by the author

*Includes Cedral #1 and Cedral #2, because their land is in Nueva Arcadia though most of associates live in the Municipality of Protección where it borders with Nueva Arcadia.

Figure 1 Distribution of peasant groups in Nueva Arcadia (1995)

Among the 40 peasant groups, we will deal with three groups in different geographical conditions. Two peasant groups in the valley plain, Juan Benito Montoya (JB: #11 of **Table 1** and of **Figure 1**) and El Sembrador (ES: The Sower, #23), and one in the mountain, Ivan Betancourt (IB: #30).

Juan Benito Montoya is located in La Venta, 4 km from La Entrada, and its area is on the floodplain of the Jagua River, a tributary of the Chamelecón River. The Jagua River usually floods in June and August, in the two most rainy months. The flooded water temporarily washes some part of the cultivated fields. Only two members among twenty-four lived in the houses of their own in La Entrada, they had owned the houses before their affiliation to the group, the other twenty-two associates lived in houses built in the residential area of the group's land facing the main road, so it looked like a small village.

These houses were built of blocks or of *bajareque* (thatched roof) and *adobe* (sun-dried mud brick), mainly roofed of wooden framework with zinc plate. All houses were equipped with electricity and water supply with the assistance of Foster Plan in Honduras, but without sewer facilities. There was also a primary school in the residential area, the children of the associates studied there. Juan Benito Montoya appeared as a hamlet.

El Sembrador is located at Los Tangos, 12 km North-East of La Entrada, 8 km from La Venta. In Los Tangos area, a hamlet is spread on both sides of the Chamelecón River. The left side is the older area where there are more inhabitants. As the number of inhabitants increased in the decade of the 1970s, new houses were built alongside the main road of the right bank. In this area, previously there were some coffee bean and other storage collections, so the right side was also called the “*Bodega* (Storage)”. The lands of El Sembrador are divided into two areas, one (Area “A” in **Table 3**) is in the southeast behind the Bodega area, and the other (Area “B”) is located 1.5 km north of the Bodega area on the right terrace of the Chamelecón River. And, the residences of the associates are dispersed within a 2 km radius area. The houses are equipped with water service and electricity. Those who had already lived there organized El Sembrador for the land question. A primary school was established by the municipality where the land was offered by El Sembrador 10 years prior and the children of El Sembrador study there.

Ivan Betancourt is located in La Cuchilla mountain, its peak reaching to a 1,035 m height, which shares the border with the Department of Santa Barbara. There was a small hamlet called Cuchilla Zapa around the crest. The ridge runs east and west, and the slope is steep. There is almost no plain, so they cultivated maize, kidney beans and coffee beans on the slopes. The temperature does not go that high and the rainy season begins earlier than in the valley plain. The direct distance from La Entrada is some 8 km but the practical roads that run through the mountains are unpaved and it takes more than 1 hour even by vehicle. The only public transportation they had was a minibus between Chalmeca of Nueva Arcadia and Protection of the Department of Santa Barbara that connected the areas once a day. However, the minibus didn’t come up to Cuchilla Zapa, so they had to take a 1 km mountain walk along the road to San Isidro where the minibus made a stop. The four of the six associates of Ivan Betancourt lived in Chuchilla Zapa and the other two in Chalmeca, 4 km away. Among the four who lived in Cuchilla Zapa IB-6 didn’t have his own house and lived with IB-2. Their three houses were dispersed and built on the slope. Electricity wasn’t provided in the mountains, but a communal water system was set up among the three hamlets, Cuchilla Zapa, San Isidro and El Chile, with the assistance of the Foster Plan in Honduras in 1989. With a limited supply of water, water was distributed only once every 3 days, which meant the three hamlets had to take turns for consumption.

4 How they formed the peasant groups

As we see in the Tables, the peasant groups were organized principally by those who had worked in Nueva Arcadia, in the 1970s. Under the new Agrarian Reform Law, the INA sent its promoters to explain the land awarding to the landless peasants and promoted them to form peasant groups. The three groups chosen for the survey were formed by landless peasants, affiliated with national peasant organizations, they requested the INA to award lands and exercised the land occupation.

Juan Benito Montoya was organized by 86 agricultural laborers in January, 1988 and affiliated with the UNC. The name of this peasant group, “Jun Benito Montoya”, was taken after a leader of the peasant movement who was murdered in 1975. They requested the INA to award 200 ha of La Venta. In this epoch, the proprietor, Norma Fasquelle, lent her land of La Venta to 2 Cubans who carried on sowing tobacco and breeding cattle. Under these conditions, they insisted on the direct operation by the owners, as requested in the Agrarian Reform Law, which had not been implemented in this case. The INA, having received the request, sent its officials to confirm the situation of the peasants continuously occupying the grassland even after the cattle had moved and after the harvest of tobacco. The proprietor demanded that the INA not approve the occupation of her land by the group. The INA reconfirmed her property and ordered Juan Benito Montoya to move out from her land. The peasants of Juan Benito Montoya therefore left, but after a short while returned to occupy the land again. Then, the proprietor had to ask for a mobilization of the army with the INA’s agreement. An associate of Juan Benito Montoya said the first confrontation with the army was very tense. The army evicted the peasants from the land withdrawing to their barracks and crops. But some peasants, after the army returned to the base, returned to reoccupy the land. The proprietor tried to evict them again by force, but the occupiers themselves left the land to avoid the conflict when the army came. These repeated actions wore the proprietor out and she decided to sell a part of her property to the INA. Then, in October, 1979, Juan Benito Montoya was awarded the usufruct on the ground; however the number of associates had diminished to only twenty-three persons through the struggle during the 3 years of process. Juan Benito Montoya obtained juridical status as an EAC in May, 1993, and was ready for the land registration.

El Sembrador was called “Tangos #4” when it was organized in 1979 with 76 peasants, the majority were agricultural laborers living in Los Tangos. The ex-proprietor of the land, whose land would be awarded to El Sembrador, was Carlos Milla Castejón who dedicated the land for cattle. The peasants had an intense desire to possess their own land near where they lived. El Sembrador requested the awarding to the INA affiliated with the ALCONH (*Alianza Campesina de Organizaciones Nacionales de Honduras*), and set to occupy the land. The occupation by the peasants and eviction by the proprietor were here also repeated several times, and finally in the following year, 1980, El Sembrador and the proprietor reached an agreement with the INA having bought the land Lps. 1,000 per

0.7 ha. El Sembrador, in the end, obtained the usufruct on the land of 25 ha, however, by the time of the awarding the number of associates had diminished to 31 persons. El Sembrador acquired juridical status as an EAC in August, 1992, changed the name of “Tangos #4” to “El Sembrador” and had paid three quarters of the total land registration fees to fulfill the qualifications of “*dominio útil* (complete domain)”.

Ivan Betancourt was organized, at first, with seven landless peasants, who were of Cuchilla Zapa and Chalmecca, then 15 peasants joined under the guidance of the UNC. In its earlier days the group was called “Cuchilla Zapa #2” but they changed the name to “Ivan Betancourt”, taken after a priest murdered in 1975. After organizing the group, they occupied a land of a proprietor, Maria de la Luz Orellana. They also experienced being evicted by the army, once from the request of the proprietor and another from the INA, but each time after they were evicted, they reoccupied the land. Finally, the proprietor approved the expropriation of the land, selling it to the INA, and they were awarded the usufruct on the land of 17 ha in 1986. However, by the time of the award the associates diminished to 16 persons. Here Ivan Betancourt was categorized as “*asentamiento* (settlement)” which did not have juridical status.

5 What the personnel organization of the groups suggest

The components of the associates of each group, as we can see above, had changed through the struggles for the land, so we denominate those who had affiliated themselves to the group before the award “original members” and those who affiliated themselves after the awarding of the land “supplementary members”. Originally, the rights of the awarded land belonged to the awarded peasant groups. This means that the beneficiary rights were collective and that each associate could not grant these beneficiary rights as one’s property. However, the Agrarian Reform Law allowed them to inherit the rights. Indeed, although the land was not registered as a property, in cases when someone withdrew his or her rights it could be transferred to anyone among the associates of the group who wanted to affiliate with the agreement. Generally, the value of rights were decided between the withdrawer and the new candidate, and the associates called a meeting to approve of their transfer and accepted the new inheritor who had agreed to protect the duties as an associate. Lastly, the INA was informed of the change of associates.

Among the members of Juan Benito Montoya, 13 out of 24 were original members (**Table 2**). JB-14 and JB-16 became members of the group by heredity from their fathers, who were original members. JB-15 and the father of JB-16 affiliated themselves without payment, because, at that time, the members had decreased during the struggle process, and the group needed to recruit new members to continue to fight on. The other supplementary members joined by purchasing the rights from the withdrawers.

El Sembrador consisted of 26 associates (**Table 3**). 9 out of 26 were original members. The group had 2 female associates. One of the two, ES-10 was a mother of an origi-

nal member who died, and thereafter she inherited his rights. ES-16, the other female associate, affiliated herself by the purchase of the rights from a retired 70-year-old member in May, 1995. These two women could become beneficiaries of Agrarian Reform, because the Law for Modernization and Development in Agriculture Sectors clarified that woman could also have beneficiary rights, stipulating both masculine and feminine nouns in Spanish in the text. ES-11 was granted the right of his brother-in-law's and cousin's when they left the group to obtain a better job out of the area. The other supplementary mem-

Table 2 Members of Juan Benito Montoya (1995)

No	sex	age	birthplace	literacy	former job	affiliation	ha
JB-1	m	69	Dep. Lempira	no	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-2	m	67	Dep. Lempira	no	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-3	m	66	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-4	m	66	Dep. Lempira	yes	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-5	m	65	Dep. Lempira	no	small farmer	original	2.8
JB-6	m	46	Dep. Lempira	no	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-7	m	46	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-8	m	45	another municipality	no	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-9	m	44	another municipality	partly	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-10	m	39	Dep. Ocotepeque	yes	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-11	m	35	Nueva Arcadia	yes	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-12	m	32	Dep. Ocotepeque	yes	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-13	m	32	Dep. Lempira	yes	agricultural laborer	original	2.8
JB-14	m	24	Nueva Arcadia	yes	sewing assistant	inheritance	2.8
JB-15	m	44	Dep. Ocotepeque	partly	agricultural laborer	auxiliary	2.8
JB-16	m	24	Dep. Lempira	yes	sewing assistant	inheritance	2.8
JB-17	m	67	another municipality	no	agricultural laborer	purchase	2.8
JB-18	m	63	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer	purchase	2.8
JB-19	m	51	another municipality	yes	agricultural laborer	purchase	2.8
JB-20	m	46	another municipality	yes	agricultural laborer	purchase	2.8
JB-21	m	42	Dep. Ocotepeque	yes	sharecropper	purchase	2.8
JB-22	m	39	Dep. Lempira	no	agricultural laborer	purchase	2.8
JB-23	m	30	Nueva Arcadia	yes	watchman	purchase	2.8
JB-24	m	24	Dep. Lempira	yes	agricultural laborer	purchase	2.8

Listed by the author. "another municipality" means "another municipality in the Department of Copan"

bers affiliated themselves by purchasing the rights.

Ivan Betancourt was a small group formed of only 6 associates, 3 originals and 3 supplementary members (**Table 4**). This group had a distinctive feature of high illiteracy. It seemed to put some restraint on their conduct. The supplementary associates affiliated themselves by purchasing of the rights in the later years, IB-4 in 1990, IB-5 in 1991 and

Table 3 Members of El Sembrador (1995)

No	sex	age	birthplace	literacy	former job	affiliation	ha
ES-1	m	70	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer	original	A 0.7
ES-2	m	68	Dep. Ocotepeque	yes	laborer, sharecropper	original	A 0.7
ES-3	m	60	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer	original	A 0.7
ES-4	m	55	Dep. Santa Bárbara	yes	agricultural laborer	original	A 0.7
ES-5	m	55	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer	original	A 0.7
ES-6	m	50	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer	original	A 0.7
ES-7	m	50	Dep. Comayagua	yes	agricultural laborer	original	B 0.7
ES-8	m	45	another municipality	no	agricultural laborer	original	A 1.4
ES-9	m	30	Nueva Arcadia	yes	agricultural laborer	original	A 0.7
ES-10	f	70	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	house wife	inheritance	A 1.4
ES-11	m	30	another municipality	yes	agricultural laborer	auxiliary	B 1.4
ES-12	m	72	another municipality	no	sharecropper	purchase	A 0.7
ES-13	m	50	Dep. Ocotepeque	yes	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 0.7
ES-14	m	50	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer.	purchase	B 1.4
ES-15	m	45	Dep. Santa Bárbara	no	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 0.7
ES-16	f	45	another municipality	no	house wife	purchase	B 0.7
ES-17	m	43	Dep. Santa Bárbara	no	sharecropper	purchase	A 0.7
ES-18	m	42	Dep. Santa Bárbara	yes	sharecropper	purchase	A 0.7
ES-19	m	40	Dep. Lempira	no	agricultural laborer.	purchase	B 1.4
ES-20	m	35	another municipality	no	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 1.4
ES-21	m	32	Dep. Ocotepeque	yes	sharecropper	purchase	A 0.7
ES-22	m	30	Dep. Ocotepeque	no	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 0.7
ES-23	m	25	Dep. Ocotepeque	yes	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 0.7
ES-24	m	22	Dep. Santa Bárbara	yes	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 0.7
ES-25	m	23	another municipality	yes	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 0.7
ES-26	m	20	Dep. Santa Bárbara	yes	agricultural laborer.	purchase	A 0.7

listed by the author. A/B before the hectareage corresponds to each land location.

Table 4 The members of Ivan Betancourt

No	sex	age	birthplace	literacy	former job	affiliation	ha
IB-1	m	65	Dep. Lempira	no	sharecropper	original	1.8
IB-2	m	50	Dep. Santa Bárbara	partly	agricultural laborer.	original	3.5
IB-3	m	41	Nueva Arcadia	partly	sharecropper	original	1.6
IB-4	m	44	Dep. Santa Bárbara	partly	agricultural laborer.	purchase	1.5
IB-5	m	43	Dep. Lempira	no	sharecropper	purchase	1.1
IB-6	m	23	Dep. Ocotepaque	no	agricultural laborer.	purchase	1.2

listed by the author

IB-6 in 1993. The number of associates diminished from 16 in 1986 because of the walk-out of some members who had complaints about the cooperative works requested in the group. Therefore, the group had to recruit new members because the minimal number of associates required was 5 persons to obtain juridical status as an EAC. A member of Ivan Betancourt said, they attempted to recruit one more person. Ivan Betancourt did not yet have juridical status.

Here, we will examine the birthplaces of the members. In Juan Benito Montoya, 9 persons, the largest group, came from the Department of Lempira, the next largest, with 7 members, from the Department of Ocotepaque. Both departments border El Salvador. Those who were from Nueva Arcadia were only 3 persons. In El Sembrador, 12 persons were from the Department of Ocotepaque, 5 each from the Department of Santa Bárbara and another municipality of the Department of Copán, and only 1 person from Nueva Arcadia. In Ivan Betancourt, 2 each came from the Department of Lempira and Santa Bárbara, 1 each from the Department of Lempira and Nueva Arcadia. The majority of those who came from the Department of Santa Bárbara had lived in Protection and Naranjito, the municipalities adjacent to Nueva Arcadia.

Based on these data, we can note inclinations among the three groups. First, the ratio of the associates from Nueva Arcadia does not reach 2% on average in each group. Second, the birthplaces can be summarized into two categories as neighborhood or distant areas. The total percentage of the neighborhood areas, Nueva Arcadia, another municipality of the Department of Copán and the Department of Santa Bárbara, reaches 42.9%, and the percentage of distant areas reaches 57.1%.

I would like to show some further examples. Among the persons from Santa Bárbara, ES-12, a supplementary member of El Sembrador, the father of ES-15, was born in Santa Rosa, the capital city of the Department of Copán in 1923. He moved to La Reina of Protection in 1948 buying some 90 ha of land for Lps. 9,000 (equivalent to US\$4,500 at that time) and registered it in 1971. His son, ES-15 was born during that time. After the proc-

lamation of Decree No. 8, a peasant group formed in La Reina occupied his land and he could not recover it. He lost all his land and left for Los Tangos. In Tangos he bought a small house along the main road in the Bodega area and rented as sharecropper 0.7 ha of Tangos #1 that had already been awarded. He paid one-twentieth of the harvest as land rent. Finally in 1990, he affiliated himself to El Sembrador by purchasing the rights of a withdrawer for Lps. 2,000 (equivalent to US\$333 at that time). ES-24 and ES-26 are brothers. They affiliated themselves as they held family relationship.

JB-5, an original member of Juan Benito Montoya, dominated some 14 ha of Mapulaca of the Department of Lempira, that borders with El Salvador, cultivating maize principally. However, when the Conflict between El Salvador and Honduras broke out in 1969, the Salvadoran army invaded the Honduran territory and his life changed completely. The Conflict came to an end in 100 hours (So, it is also called “The 100 Hour War”), but even after the armistice, a 5 km zone from the border was placed under the control of the Army in Honduras. All the inhabitants got ousted from the zone and it took nearly 10 years to be allowed to cultivate the land there again. Consequently, he had to leave the Department of Lempira and moved to Nueva Arcadia. At that time Juan Benito Montoya was in the struggle for the land and needed more peers. JB-5 had a friend who was already a member of the group, therefore he could also join in through this friend.

JB-21, a supplementary associate of Juan Benito Montoya, was born in the Department of Ocotepeque. He moved to La Unión of the Department of Santa Bárbara in the Conflict year. He rented some 7 ha, cultivated maize and kidney beans on half of his land while letting the rest lie fallow. In 1987, he knew that an associate of Juan Benito Montoya wanted to sell his rights in order to repay his debt. To complete the condition of affiliation he decided to take over the debt amounting to 90 kg of maize, which the associate rented from another associate.

ES-2, an original member of El Sembrador, moved from Ocotepeque to Los Tangos in 1970, he had been living as a sharecropper and an agricultural laborer. When he arrived at the Bodega area of Los Tangos, it was easy to rent land and a house because there was enough unused land. He could buy a task, some 4 ares (400 m²) of land for residence with a view to the main road for Lps. 200 (equivalent to US\$100 at that time) in 1971. In the 1970s, residents gradually increased in the Bodega area. In the early 1990s, 11 peasant groups existed in Los Tangos. Among them, Tangos #1 was the oldest group, and other groups were formed as inhabitants and struggles for land increased.

These surveys suggest that there was a population movement after the Conflict between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969. Many peasants, who were displaced from their land in the border zone of the Department of Lempira and the Department of Ocotepeque, amid growing anxiety, immigrated to Nueva Arcadia looking for better lives and labor opportunities to be employed as agricultural laborers. This immigration had a critical role in organizing peasant groups.

6 Internal migration and Agrarian Reform

As previously mentioned, at the root of the Conflict was the socio-economic disequilibrium between El Salvador and Honduras. One aspect of this was the difference in population density. In 1965, El Salvador had a 3,245 thousand population for 21,040 km² territory, Honduras had 2,349 thousand for 112,090 km².¹¹ The former had a population density of 154.2/km², 7 times more than the latter, 21.0/km². This population pressure produced emigrants from El Salvador to Honduras. Approximately 200 thousand Salvadorans had immigrated to Honduras between 1932 and 1968. The Salvadoran population growth in the country had been about 8 % of the Honduran population just before the Conflict.¹² In Nueva Arcadia there was a colony around Chalmecca, in which Salvadoran immigrants lived, and some of them engaged in agriculture as laborers on tobacco farms and ranches, others worked as sharecroppers, or ran businesses. After the Conflict, the Salvadorans were expelled from their lands on a nationwide basis, which of course included Nueva Arcadia, and some who were expelled from the border zone flew to take place of the expelled Salvadorans. Such a migratory movement made a threat to social stability and increased confusion inside the country.

According to Rodríguez de Simons,¹³ the data registered at the registration office in each of the Departments shows us the aspect of the migratory movement between 1969 to 1974 as follows;

The total number of male migrants during this epoch was 83,408 persons and the migration rate was 13.51%. The number of females was 81,219 corresponding to 12.96%. It is understood that the level of internal migration during the period of 1969 to 1974 was high compared to its of between 1983 and 1988, the rate shows that 7.96% were males and 9.11% were females. This data does not include temporary migration.

Therefore, I would calculate the difference between male immigrant and male emigrant numbers from each Department to clarify the aspects of the interdepartmental migration during 1969 to 1974. The result is shown in **Table 5**.

First, we notice that there is no department with a positive result by subtracting the number of emigrants from the number of immigrants to other departments. However, when the numbers are totaled, the results to each department show that 6 departments of all 18 departments, Atlántida, Colón, Comayagua, Cortés, Francisco Morazán and Islas de Bahía, have positive value. Francisco Morazán is a department whose capital Tegucigalpa is a major population center of the country, and other departments are in the Caribbean Coast where they have principal industries such as vast plantations for export agri-

11 United Nations, 2013.

12 Becerra, 1983: 184.

13 Rodríguez de Simons, 1990: 10-11.

Table 5 Balance of interdepartment migration (male, 1969-74)

	Atla	Co.	Com	Cop	Cor	Cho	EPa	FMO	GaD	Int	IBa	LPa	Lem	Oco	Ola	SBa	Valle	Yoro	total
Atlántida	—	-165	160	806	100	94	33	-474	-18	197	-116	67	812	276	393	914	431	1,103	4,613
Colón	165	—	145	740	399	29	16	-2	321	385	-65	29	236	120	680	605	80	1,153	5,036
Comayagua	-160	-14	—	10	-437	87	75	-334	-7	272	7	535	79	47	-54	60	148	-153	161
Copán	-806	-740	-10	—	-1,224	12	-15	-189	-6	-14	-1	-7	517	1,236	-3	-355	6	-434	-2,033
Cortés	-100	-399	437	1,224	—	367	63	-541	-27	982	-41	187	1,107	610	294	3,084	864	1,293	9,404
Choluteca	-94	-29	-84	-12	-367	—	-130	-1,716	-5	-12	-6	2	-2	2	-392	-40	-195	-75	-3,155
El Paraíso	-33	-16	-75	15	-63	130	—	-936	-8	3	-2	-11	7	-10	-2	-6	95	9	-903
F. Morazán	474	2	334	189	541	1,716	936	—	-19	94	-7	427	45	249	907	228	1,313	692	8,121
G. a Dios	18	-321	7	6	27	5	8	19	—	2	-12	8	0	2	25	5	7	11	-183
Intibucá	-197	-385	-272	14	-982	12	-3	-94	-2	—	-2	-160	28	34	-21	-100	19	-103	-2,214
I. Bahía	116	65	-7	1	41	6	2	7	12	2	—	1	1	2	8	1	8	-32	234
La Paz	-67	-29	-535	7	-187	-2	11	-427	-8	160	-1	—	4	14	138	-25	14	-74	-1,007
Lempira	-812	-256	-79	-517	-110	2	-7	-45	0	-28	-1	-4	—	90	-11	-452	8	-446	-2,668
Ocotepesque	-276	-120	-47	-1,236	-610	-2	-10	-249	-2	-34	-2	-14	-90	—	-8	-473	6	-123	-3,290
Olancho	-393	-680	54	3	-294	392	2	-907	-2	21	-8	138	11	8	—	-68	151	-58	-1,630
S. Bárbara	-914	-605	-60	355	-308	50	6	-228	-5	-100	-1	25	452	473	68	—	13	-354	-1,133
Valle	-431	-80	-148	-6	-864	-195	-36	-1,313	-7	-19	-8	-14	-8	-6	-151	-13	—	-559	-3,858
Yoro	-1,103	-1,153	153	434	-1,293	75	-9	-692	-11	103	-32	74	446	123	58	354	559	—	-1,914

calculated by the author based on Rodríguez de Simons (1990)

culture like bananas, oil palm and others, and also the related businesses.

On the other hand, departments of negative value are located in the rural areas. Particularly, the results indicate clearly that there was a massive migratory movement from Departments bound to El Salvador, Ocotepeque, Lempira, Intibucá, La Paz and Valle. The Department of Copán, where Nueva Arcadia is, received many immigrants from the Departments of Lempira and Ocotepeque, and sent many emigrants to the Caribbean Coast. This tendency coincides with the aspect of immigration observed through surveys of the Peasants Group in Nueva Arcadia. Many people expelled from the border zone came to Nueva Arcadia, and many who desired a better life left the place.

7 Conclusion

As was mentioned at the beginning, Honduran people, as many others in developing countries, are facing anxiety over public security which is deeply involved with social problems.

Neither the politics emphasizing on the macro economy introduced in the 1990s nor the stream of Globalization have resolved such social problems. Moreover, the external debt of Honduras has increased more than 2 billion (2,000 million) dollars by 2015.

We saw the Conflict between El Salvador and Honduras provoke the massive internal migratory movement and social confusion, and Agrarian Reform since the military reform through the INA and Peasant Groups realize a certain land redistribution to make the migrants settle and defuse instability.

It is said that the enforcement of the Law for Modernization and Development in the agricultural sector in effect ended the Agrarian Reform in Honduras. In fact, the structural imbalance of the agriculture sectors called “dual structure” has not been eliminated. Currently, the INA keeps on tackling the qualification project and 5,798 groups of the reformed sectors carried out the registration of 494,744.67 ha by 2016.¹⁴ This means, at the same time, that awarded land, once registered, will also be traded in the market economy.

The real aim of economic development is not to enlarge the socio-economic gap among social classes, but to reduce it. If not, such countries could not to be called “developing”. The economic view point would not give a positive evaluation to Agrarian Reform in Honduras. Nevertheless, its meaning and the peasant groups were not small. In former times, the Mexican sociologist Stavenhagen insisted on the need for “pesantization”, a politics to emphasize the utilization and settlement of the rural labor force, in rural development.¹⁵ As this analysis suggests, Agrarian Reform had absorbed the surplus rural labor

14 Instituto Nacional Agrario, 2016.

15 Stavenhagen, 1981: 181.

force, made it settle in the rural areas and this consequently retarded a concentration of population to urban areas.

The precondition of a more stabilized society is required to resolve social problems. This historical affair suggests to us an alternative for social development. Because land is, for the persons who continue to cultivate it, a reliable way to guarantee their life.

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