Agrarian reform in the philippines history pdf

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The agrarian reform aimed at modernizing the feudal structure of southern agriculture, by expropriating the most unproductive portions of the large estates (latifundia) and redistributing them to landless peasants in the form of small holdings.From: International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, 2009 This paper presents a case study of governmental sensemaking under martial law in the Philippines under President Ferdinand Marcos. Data was gathered about the Agrarian Reform Program in particular through: a) personal interviews with decision makers involved in the Agrarian Reform Program; b) non-participants who observed the program in action; and c) an extensive search of available primary and secondary sources. Contemporary understandings of sensemaking unavailable during the Marcos era are applied to his initiative. It was determined that many of the elements of sensemaking were associated with the Agrarian Reform Program in the Philippines, as were various triggers stimulating such sensemaking as well. Land tenancy and related agrarian problems were afflictions of Filipinos long before the first Americans arrived (McLennan, 1973). Sharecropping and debt peonage were already in place in the Philippines before the Spanish conquest, which began in 1565 (Murray, 1972). Both Spanish and American mindsets discounted the traditional communal concept of land ownership. Indigenous tribes that shared ancestral hunting and planting grounds deeply resented the “Christian” intrusion into the lands (Bauzon, 1975). When the Spanish arrived from Central and South America, they introduced caciquism and individual ownership of land. Leaving traditional village structure virtually in place, a village headman, known by the Carib term cacique, was given authority in each locale. The caciques, as tax collectors, were in a position to preserve their power and increase personal landholdings. Peasants, who had lived communally for generations, unwittingly became tenants or were driven from the land entirely (Murray, 1972; Pelzer, 1948). This circumstance carried forward for many years until Ferdinand Marcos arrived on the scene and addressed the issue. In this paper we present a case study of governmental sensemaking under martial law in the Philippines under the leadership of President Marcos. Studies of managerial sensemaking are rare (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Lüscher & Lewis, 2008, Maitlis, 2005). Our purpose here is to apply more contemporary understandings of sensemaking unavailable during the Marcos era to his initiative. Background Between 1898 and 1935, the Americans sought to give land to the landless, rationalize the system of land registration and the issuance of land titles, break up landed estates, and improve tenancy conditions in the Philippines (Bauzon, 1975). They failed. Nationals preferred to remain in community settlements rather than adopt the American pattern of homesteads that separated families miles from one another. In addition, landlord manipulation blocked tenants from applying for homestead grants, and there was no means of systematically surveying public lands available for homesteading. Possession standards, such as rendering productive one-fifth of the homestead within five years, were too stringent and the infrastructure, such as bridges and roads and health care, was inadequate to support population dispersion. Many of the landed estates had been owned by Catholic friars. When these were purchased by the government, the friars retained their best lands. Of the friar lands actually acquired by the government, some were left undistributed. These were leased, or eventually acquired, through purchase, by American business firms and affluent Filipinos. Bigger holdings and increased tenancy resulted (Bauzon, 1975). Historically, Philippine agrarian reform measures have sought to attain social (equity) and political goals. Economic objectives (e.g., productivity and income distribution) have been secondary. Government intervention, typically, has come as a direct response to rural unrest and open rebellion. Major agrarian reform was first pursued (Starner, 1961) during the administration of Ramon Magsaysay (1954-1957). Through passage of the Agricultural land Reform Code of 1963 (R A. 3844), the government under Diosdado Macapagal was the first to seek a balance between social, political, and economic objectives (de los Reyes, 1972; Montaño, 1982). The Agricultural Land Reform Code of 1963, ultimately amended in 1971 (R. A. 6389) by the Marcos administration to become the Code of Agrarian Reforms (1971 Code), sought to establish owner-cultivatorship or cooperative-cultivatorship among those who lived and worked on the land as tillers. It stressed family-size farms to facilitate the flow of landlord capital from agriculture to industrial development. The code was to achieve a “dignified existence” for the small farmer, free from pernicious institutional restraints and practices. It was installed to create a “truly viable social and economic structure in agriculture conducive to greater productivity and higher farm incomes” through a cooperative system of production, processing, marketing, distribution, credit, and services. Characteristically, the 1963 Code was not taken seriously until disruptions occurred in 1970. Even then, the pilot area of Nueva Ecija was about the only area touched (Murray, 1972; de los Reyes, 1972). On September 21, 1972 after skirmishes broke out, President Marcos declared martial law (International Labor Office, 1974). Five days later, Presidential Decree 27 (PD 27) designated the entire country a land reform area and declared land reform the “cornerstone of the New Society.” Success of the Agrarian Reform Program (ARP) would likely depend in large part upon the ability of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MAR) to interpret environmental activity and to act on that knowledge. This circumstance is the focus of this paper. Methodology The task of this study was to identify policy-makers, implementers, analysts, investigators, researchers, and affected persons who, collectively, constituted the decision structure in the Philippines under President Marcos and martial law. Data was gathered in 1981 and 1982 through: a) personal interviews; b) non-participant observation; and c) an extensive survey of available primary and secondary sources. That data set is being revisited in light of advances in our understanding of organizational learning and related emergent literature on sensemaking in particular. Personal Interviews Many policies related to agrarian reform were issued by President Marcos following the declaration of martial law on September 21, 1972. However, PD 27, or the Tenant Emancipation Decree, became the rallying point for all other presidential decrees. Hence, PD 27 was selected as the reference point for this study. The scope of the study was limited to land tenure improvement. The population covered in the survey consisted of individuals who directly or indirectly participated in the agrarian reform decision-making process under martial law, from Problem Definition to Responsibility Bearing (Johnson & Rossmiller, 1978). The population was divided into four sets according to the roles individuals played in the policy-making process. A description of each sample set is contained in the following sections. Core policy-making participants. A modification of the reputational panel approach, used elsewhere in a sociological study of Filipino technocrats (Arcega, 1976), was used to draw the purposive sample of PD 27 policy-making participants. Specifically, a top-level executive of the MAR, known from previous association with the primary investigator to have participated in the formulation of PD 27, was chosen for an initial in-depth interview. The interview was conducted personally by the primary investigator of the study. Interview sessions generally lasted for one hour or more. An audio recording of each interview was made and a transcription generated. Each executive was asked to name other persons who participated in PD 27 formulation. Each of those participants mentioned was, in turn, contacted for an in-depth interview. Succeeding informants were asked to name those whom they remembered to have participated in relevant policy-making activities, and the process was repeated. Those whose actual participation was confirmed by at least two persons were considered to be members of the policy-making group that formulated PD 27. Names that were not cross-checked in this sequential process were dropped from the list. Twenty-two remaining names on the list may be called “core policy-making participants.” Though some members of this population may have been inadvertently omitted from the panel, the probability of their being central to the formulation of PD 27 was remote. Ten out of these twenty-two (or 45%) constituted the interview sample of PD 27 policy-makers. To preserve anonymity, no names or titles are reported here. The population of implementers of interest to this study included those involved in implementing Operation Land Transfer (OLT) in Region 8 (Province of Leyte), particularly in the pilot municipality of Sante Fe. Time, budgetary, and other constraints made it necessary to limit the sample to only upper-level executives (e.g., director of a bureau) in a given coordinating agency who were in a position to give a description and assessment of the implementation process. Nevertheless, as we moved from the central to the regional, district, and team levels of administration, samples were sought from implementers with actual field experience in OLT implementation and who were still involved in the same implementation process. For various reasons, some participants could not be contacted for an interview; however, when the whole sequence of listing and contacting of informants was completed, a good cross-check of the names of the participants was achieved. Participants whose actual participation was confirmed by at least two persons were considered to be members of the population of policy-making participants who formulated PD 27. Persons involved with the data and analytical systems of PD 27 and OLT. The persons involved in PD 27 formulation as sources or providers of information for the policy-making process were identified in interviews with the policy-making participants. Identifying the sample was relatively simple since the core of the system was well established and headquartered in the Center for Operation Land Transfer of the MAR. Other supporting units of the data and analytical systems located outside MAR, however, required far more legwork before they could be delineated. Of the units that made up the OLT data and analytical systems, the sample drawn was again limited to top-level administrators who were themselves statisticians or analysts. Affected parties and other interest groups. The target groups of the land tenure improvement component of the agrarian reform program are the tenants and their landlords under the coverage of PD 2, PD 27, and other succeeding policies. The non-target groups include such interest groups as mass media, religious and civic organizations, political parties, and the like. The tenants are organized into three main farmer organizations: Federation of Free Farmers; Federation of Land Reform Farmers; and Foundation of Agricultural and Industrial toiling Hands. Landlords also have their own organizations in certain parts of the country. The government-directed cooperatives program also provides an avenue for tenants to work together for a common purpose through the Samahang Nayon (Barrio Association) or Kilusang Bayan (full-fledged cooperatives). However, membership in the cooperative is not limited to tenants; a landowner can also be a member. Because of time, budgetary, and logistical issues, this part of the study was limited to the farmer organizations and Samahang Nayon. Supplementary data were also gathered from primary and secondary sources, such as official government documents and newspapers. Many primary data of enormous research significance were obtained from policy/implementation workshops or conferences (e.g., Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MAR), 1978). Of the ten core decision-making participants interviewed, only nine were asked about their specific contributions to the drafting of PD 27. These contributions were in the form of data/information provided as inputs into the decision-making process or in terms of policy recommendation(s) or prescription(s) embodied in the provision(s) of the decree. Of those interviewed, three claimed making specific recommendations that now formed part of the decree. One of these three came from the public sector (PES); the other two were from the private sector. Interestingly, the two consultants from the private sector also claimed having made recommendations not incorporated in PD 27. Moreover, there was a consensus among the respondents that the president worked out the final version of the decree and that the retention area of seven hectares was his personal choice because, supposedly, seven is his lucky number. Both members of the Think Tank and the MAR group assert that there are features in the decree that were not included in the drafts their respective groups submitted to the president. More than likely, therefore, the president adopted and combined parts of both proposals, adding his own ideas and/or those of his closest advisers in Malacanang to make up the whole PD 27. Given the specific recommendations/prescriptions that were contributed by the policy-making participants, it was necessary to work back through the information system to identify the various data/information used by participants in arriving at their prescriptions. In so doing, the analytical and data systems, which are the sources of these data/information, were also identified. It may be noted that the participants whose prescriptions were eventually incorporated in the decree also had considerable experience from which to draw knowledge that formed the basis of their prescriptions. For example, the policy-making participant from the PES claimed having had the basic information in his mind to make the prescription since he had been dealing with land reform for a long time and land reform has been his continuing concern. The private sector participants shared similar views. One of them admitted having the information stored in his memory, which was partly derived from his experiences as administrator of land reform in the 1950s. In addition to his educational background, the same person had considerable experience as advisor on land settlement and community development in other Asian countries. Sensemaking In this paper we apply contemporary understandings of sensemaking unavailable during the Marcos era to his agrarian reform initiative. For that purpose we conceive of sensemaking as an interpretive process in the manner of Feldman (1989). Through sensemaking, individuals give structure to the unknown (Waterman, 1990) and use retrospective accounts to explain occurrences (Louis, 1980) making sense of circumstances as they are encountered (Huber & Daft, 1987). To understand sensemaking, think of the proverbial blind men who collectively examined an elephant with each reporting his impression of the animal as touched and encountered. The result was a “…set of ideas with explanatory possibilities, rather than a body of knowledge, per se” (Weick, 1995, p. xi). They collectively derived a view of the elephant or made sense of what was presented to them to that point. The point is, “organizations question and reconstruct existing perspectives, frameworks, or premises on a daily basis through a continuous process of knowledge creation” (Nonaka, Toyama, & Byoière, 2003, p. 492). Our initial finding was that sensemaking within the ARP was stimulated by triggers associated with sensemaking in a variety of organizations (Argyris & Schön, 1978; 1996). There is much speculation about what might trigger such sensemaking (Weick, 1995), but a few ideas particularly applied to this case. First, interruptions trigger sensemaking when theories of action (Argyris & Schön, 1978, 1996) and shared mental models (Senge, 2006) do not fit emergent circumstances. Cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) can accompany the situation. Certainly, “vocabularies of coping” (Weick, 1995 p. 121), are inadequate for the advancing situation. Interruptions spark sensemaking when an unexpected event occurs and can be prompted when an expected event does not occur (Mandler, 1984). Similarly, organizational learning can be stimulated by external shocks (Cyert & March, 1963), or disturbances to which the organization must adapt (Pawlowsky, 2003). “In either case the ongoing cognitive activity is interrupted. At this point, coping, problem solving, and ‘learning’ activities take place. It is apparently at this point that the focus of consciousness is on the interruption” (Mandler, 1984, p. 188). Innovation is stimulated by both internal and external shocks (Schroeder, Van de Ven, Scudder, & Polley, 1989). The “…severity of an incident does not guarantee that it can be used to bring about organizational learning” (Kädtler, 2003, p. 224). In time, even disasters become the victim of topicality. Third, environmental cues trigger sensemaking. Such cues “…are properties of an ongoing flow that increase the probability that people, regardless of where they sit in organizations or who they are, will take note of what is happening and pursue it” (Weick, 1995, p. 86). For example, as information load “…increases, people take increasingly strong steps to manage it. They begin with omission, and then move to greater tolerance of error, queuing, filtering, abstracting, using multiple channels, escape, and end with chunking” (Weick, p. 87). Similarly, complexity of circumstances affects what people notice and ignore. As complexity increases, the reliance on habitual routine cues increases as well, which can be counter-productive (Weick, 1980). With ARP such cues were simply missed as can happen. Sensemaking increases as environmental cues do not fit available mental models (Friedman, 2003), cognitive maps (Weick & Bougon, 2001), frames (Rothman & Friedman, 2003), or perceptual frameworks. (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988) Involvement escalates under resulting conditions of equivocality as divergent interpretations of circumstances are voiced. (e.g., Daft & Macintosh, 1981) “Equivocality is reduced through shared observations and discussion until a common grammar and course of action can be agreed upon” (Daft & Weick, 2001, p. 252). Fourth, interest groups and social movements can become important triggers of sensemaking. This was the case during the agrarian reform initiative, as we will see later. Interest groups represent private activity, whereas social movements are public. Their influences on sensemaking and organizational learning are the same. Both cause involuntary learning, which “…takes place because the organization is confronted with problems it has not chosen to deal with and, in order to cope, must develop competences it would not have developed without being forced to” (Kädtler, 2003, p. 221). Technical or legal “autism” (p. 226) can prevent organizations from recognizing important aspects of reality. Results Weick (1995, 2001) has suggested seven characteristics of sensemaking: social context, personal identity, retrospection, salient cues, ongoing projects, plausibility, and enactment. Each of these was found in the implementation and management of the ARP. The following sections explain, using Weick’s work as a framework. Social Context Sensemaking issues from a social context (Weick, 2001). “Even monologues and one-way communications presume an audience” (Weick, 1995, p. 40). Sensemaking is social when people coordinate their actions as they try to gather meaning from different views of ambiguous events (Eisenberg, 1984). “To change meaning is to change the social context” (Weick, 2001, p. 461). The ARP as revealed in this study included a social context as well. On September 21, 1972, Ferdinand Marcos unilaterally dissolved the Congress, instituted martial law, and designated himself President, Prime Minister, and sole law-giver of the Philippines. Because martial law by definition implies centralization of authority, organizational responses to stimuli from the external or task environment (Dill, 1958) were ultimately assembled by President Marcos. Decisions were actually formulated with the periodic advice of cabinet members, close Presidential staff, and advisers. Reflecting the values of Filipinos, ARP had three basic aims: a) to prevent the resurgence of widespread social tension and violence among farmers (MAR, 1978; Kerkvliet, 1974; Overholt, 1976); b) to provide more equitable distribution of land and income (Mangahas, Miralao, & de los Reyes, 1976; World Bank, 1975) as well as land-based wealth, status, opportunity and power (Asian Development Bank, 1978; Food and Agriculture Organization, 1979); and c) to increase agricultural productivity (Mangahas, Miralao, & de los Reyes; Ruttan, 1966; de los Reyes, 1972; Asian Development Bank). Accomplishment of those aims was thwarted because beliefs of participants about ARP initiatives and the corresponding environmental response were based on faulty assumptions or myths. Chances that the government would respond in a manner appropriate to environmental demands were limited. Personal and Organizational Identity Shared beliefs, values, norms, and perceptions form the basis for organizational identity and provide the framework allowing group interaction with other entities (e.g., Basu & Palazzo, 2008) and influence the relationships they choose to form (Brickson, 2007). Their particular decision paths follow as a matter of course. Individually, we all have identities that maintain our sense of self, influence how we view our circumstances, and propel our behavior (e.g., Sen, 2002). In that regard, groups help us understand who we are and determine what we want. Their influence is a function of timing and context. (e.g., Sharper, 2008) Identities also form between communities as both groups build common cognitive links (Cohendet & Simon, 2008) and related cognitive distance (Nooteboom, 1999) is reduced. Weick (1995) suggested that individual and organizational identities are formed from the process of interaction. “When identity is threatened or diffused, as when one loses a job without warning, one’s grasp of what is happening begins to loosen” (Weick, 2001, p. 461). “By projecting itself onto its environment, an organization develops a self-referential appreciation of its own identity, which in turn permits the organization to act in relation to its environment” (Ring & Van de Ven, 1989, p. 180). Personal identity and sensemaking are, therefore, closely aligned. The issue of personal and organizational identity is illustrated with the issuance of Proclamation 1081, declaring martial law over the entire country. Augmenting our own study, Dolan (1991) provided an illustration of this appropriate to our discussion. Specifically, President Marcos was the first president of independent Philippines to gain a second elected term. However, the period was characterized by slowing economic growth, communist insurgency, and related gangsterism. Marcos had positioned himself in the role of John F. Kennedy with Imelda as his Jackie following the first inauguration. General dissatisfaction continued because of hearsay that Marcos might engineer changes in the 1935 constitution to keep himself in power. Random bombings and other disruptions continued. At a Liberal Party rally in 1971, grenade explosions killed 9 and left 100 wounded. On September 21, 1972 Marcos issued Proclamation 1081, which proclaimed martial law over the entire country. A total of 30,000 detainees were held in response (Dolan, 1991). Influences on personal identity. Of the ten core policy-makers interviewed, nine were asked about their personal contributions to the drafting of PD 27. Of those, one from the public sector and two from the private sector claimed having made recommendations that were incorporated into PD 27, or contended that submissions of data or information made by them were included in the deliberations. In his report to the president, the public-sector (PES) participant “recommended that in view of the President’s thinking on the promotion of social justice, proper compensation should be considered even if all the tenanted rice and corn lands were to be transferred to the actual tiller” (Montaño, 1982, Table 5, p. 157). The same person also “indicated to the President that a certain area should be retained by the landowners.” One of the private-sector policymakers drafted the wording of PD 27: “emancipation of the farmers from the bondage of landlordism.” While that became part of the decree, his recommendation of “zero retention” for landlords was de facto rejected by the president. (Montaño, 1982, Table 5, p. 157). The other private-sector participant (Agricultural Consulting Firm) proposed recommendations that became part of PD 27: a) land valuation formula of “2 ½ times the average harvest of three normal crop years …”; and b) the amortization obligation of the tenant. However, the same person objected to the compulsory membership of the tenant in a farmer’s cooperative on the ground that there was no viable cooperative system to speak of at that time (Montaño, 1982, Table 5, p. 157). Both Think Tank and MAR members, when interviewed, agreed that certain features of PD 27 did not come from their respective drafts. The consensus among respondents was that the president authored the final version of the decree himself. Given the specific nature of recommendations contributed, respondents were questioned concerning sources of data and information used in the deliberations. As far as the persons interviewed were concerned, alternatives proposed by the core PD 27 policy-makers stemmed from their collective work experience and in-service training, as well as extensive local and international travel conducted by some. The judgments of participants whose suggestions were ultimately incorporated into PD 27 were intuitive and experientially derived. Personal identity of President Marcos. The president and his immediate decision-makers were practically insulated from environmental cues. Such information-rich, non-target groups as the press, church, and civic organizations were ignored. Certainly, opposition had no voice (Guzman, 1977). To operationalize ARP, the Minister of Agrarian Reform was authorized to organize a committee to formulate rules and regulations governing the implementation of PD 27. Initially composed of key officials along with technical and legal staff from the MAR, it eventually included officials of other agencies who would be involved in implementation, certain peasant leaders, domestic consultants from both the public and private sectors, and foreign advisors with experience in land reform. Within one month, the committee submitted a draft of the Rules and Regulations Implementing PD 27. When discrepancies between the committee’s document and the views of the president became evident, particularly regarding land retention, the draft was rejected. Thereafter, implementation rules and regulations were issued by the president unilaterally. The MAR continued to draft recommendations which could be issued as Letters of Instruction if the president approved of them. As a result, the actions of individuals operating within the ARP were severed from organizational action. Retrospection It is an assumption of sensemaking that individuals can only interpret circumstances in retrospect Weick (1995, 2001). We are, then, historians and no lived experience will have a single interpretation (Schutz, 1967). “The important point is that retrospective sensemaking is an activity in which many possible meanings may need to be synthesized… The problem is that there are too many meanings, not too few. The problem faced by the sensemaker is one of equivocality, not one of uncertainty” (Weick, 1995, p. 26, 28). “Retrospection wrongly implies that errors should have been anticipated and that good perceptions, good analyses, and good discussion will yield good results” (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988, p. 40). When this “…feeling is achieved, further retrospective processing stops” (Weick, p. 29). The retrospective nature of sensemaking was apparent in the operation of the ARP. ARP expectations of real world changes resulting from organizational action, as expressed by respondents in interviews, were compared with actual changes reported by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) resulting from Land Tenure activities (Department of Agrarian Reform, 1978). It was determined that actual responses of, or changes in, the external environment reported by DAR did not correspond with responses expected. For example, the resettlement program was expected to ultimately increase employment, raise productivity, and improve income distribution. Instead, the results reported were the intermediate outputs, expressed as the number of existing settlements upgraded and new ones opened and developed into viable agribusiness communities. Thus, the reporting left a knowledge gap concerning the impact of the program on target sectors: the tenants and landless agricultural workers. Salient Cues Sensemaking is about people weaving tiny “extracted cues” (Weick, 1995, p. 450) into “…full-blown stories, typically in ways that selectively shore up an initial hunch. The prototype here is a self-fulfilling prophecy or an application of the documentary method” (Weick, 2001, p. 462). The knowledge they have acquired and the state of that knowledge is reflected in the stories they tell. Conceptually, the collective group understanding provides a frame (Goffman, 1974) or structural context (Weick, 1995) for understanding. The gathering of such cues is related to concepts such as search (Cyert & March, 1963), noticing (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988), and scanning (Daft & Weick, 1984). Through sensemaking, a context for understanding and action is supplied, without which “…objects and events have equivocal or multiple meanings” (Leiter, 1980, p. 107). Salient clues played a role in ARP as well. Under the ARP, Operation Land Transfer was organized to implement PD 27. In particular, it sought to transform or convert the tenants of rice and corn lands into amortizing owners and eventually full owners. It was a formidable undertaking under the best of conditions. The knowledge of decision-makers, however, was isolated from their activity. They simply missed cues that were readily available. The first step in OLT involved the identification of tenants. Such identification was the role played by the Barrio Data Gathering Team, according to standard operating procedures (Pilot Project Systems and Procedures Committee, 1977). Unfortunately, during the early phase of this identification process the standard operating procedures did not exactly spell out, nor possibly anticipate, the variety of circumstances in which the Barrio Data Gathering Team might find the “tenant.” Among the new knowledge identified was that some tenants were actually sub-leasing the landholdings they were supposedly operating. This situation caused confusion and delayed ARP implementation. The Barrio Data Gathering Team could, on the one hand, blindly follow the standard operating procedure and record the supposed tenant, opening up possibility of legal protest later on. On the other hand, following the “land-to-the-tiller” spirit of the land reform decree, the Barrio Data Gathering Team believed that the sub-lessee ought to be considered the actual “tenant.” Unless this new knowledge by the Barrio Data Gathering Team was accepted by program administrators and incorporated into standard operating procedures, the ARP was going about implementation without adequate information. Salient cues were missed or mishandled. Ongoing Projects Reflection confirms that individuals cannot avoid acting as life unfolds. Sensemaking takes place in such an environment. Sensemaking assumes that planning is not useful though it provides the illusion that we can control the future (e.g., Weick, 1995, 2001). Even Marcos and the government could not avoid acting. The attempt to bring agrarian reform to the Philippines via martial law was an ambitious project for Marcos. It sought to remedy inequities evident long before he appeared on the scene. Centralization of ARP decision-making coupled with faulty information gathering and interpretative mechanisms guaranteed ignorance, but action was required nonetheless (e.g., Godkin & Montaño, 1991). Because an inadequate amount of information was gathered from the environment, the government was unable to operationalize its policy on auxiliary crops, and delays in land valuation resulted. In the MAR, it appeared that outside the Policy Formulation Office (PFO) no other body was given responsibility for and authority to perform this task. The MAR-based analytical unit generally lacked trained personnel with commensurate knowledge and data for deriving prescriptive information (Johnson, 1977). Key questions concerning environmental behavior remained unresolved during this period. For example, OLT beneficiaries were better off economically after martial law than they were before, considering such new obligations as land amortization, irrigation fees, land taxes, Samahang Nayon (barrio association) contributions, and general increases in production costs. Why, then, did Certificate of Land Transfer holders return their certificates, or why were they not willing to join the Samahan Nayon? Was this an indication that the land transfer package was more of a liability than a benefit to them? As already illustrated, “[the] experience of sensemaking is one in which people are thrown into the middle of things and forced to act without the benefit of a stable sense of what is happening. These handicaps are not attributable to personal shortcomings but rather to the stubborn, ongoing character of experience” (Weick, 2001, p. 462). “Sensemaking never starts. The reason it never starts is that pure duration never stops. People are always in the middle of things, which become things, only when those same people focus on the past from some point beyond it” (Weick, 1995, p. 43). Individuals involved directly or tangentially in ARP were thrust into situations with a corresponding sense of “thrownness” (Winograd & Flores, 1986, pp. 34-36). On the strategic level, ARP policy-making began with the formulation of PD 27 itself. OLT was augmented by an information system designed specifically to support policy-making on an operational level. The beliefs of organizational actors concerning environmental circumstances bore little resemblance to real world conditions. Obsolete data, such as OLT dependence upon 1960 Census of Agriculture data, and the fact that some performance variables were not measured at all delayed governmental action. The 1960 data did not reflect expansion in land area resulting from land clearing and development during the 1960s. As a result, the Bureau of Lands recruited inadequate numbers of personnel to conduct parcellary mapping of land. Unquantifiable policies delayed the search for environmental information and cues. At one point, a decision was made to allow certain landlords to retain seven hectares of rice and/or corn land in accordance with PD 27 “under certain conditions.” Until those conditions were operationalized, accurate assessments of environmental conditions were impractical. Unreliable farm-level production records complicated the land transfer process. Under PD 27, land valuation was to be based upon production figures that were never available. The MAR relied upon the Landowner-Tenant Production Agreement (LTPA) and the Barrio Committee on Land Production (BCLP) to generate valuation. Under LTPA valuation, as provided under PD 27, tenants and landlords had a bargaining arrangement through which they were to arrive at mutual agreement on the average gross production (AGP) of rice/corn land for the most recent three “normal” crop years prior to October 21, 1972. Each of the pair had a vested interest in the resulting AGP and each exerted whatever influence he might have had. Though it would seem a tenant would have the disadvantage, many landlords complained that the PD 27-based pricing was confiscatory (Kerkvliet, 1974). It is interesting to note that ARP participants were no different from others outside of government who were free of martial law. They, too, were thrown into circumstances. In fact, the ARP was unwieldy from the perspective of the MAR because authority to manipulate broad range short-run and long-run policy instruments was dispersed among different agencies. Plausibility The reasoning of sensemaking is that it need not be necessarily accurate (Weick, 1995) or “…correct, but it fits the facts, albeit imperfectly at times” (Isenberg, 1986, p. 242). Rather, it is effected by the stories created by participants to make sense of situations so that they are collectively seen as believable, credible and possible. A “…plausible sense is constrained by agreements with others, consistency with one’s own stake in events, the recent past, visible cues, projects that are demonstrably under way, scenarios that are familiar, and actions that have tangible effects” (Weick, 2001, p. 462). There is an element of satisficing (March & Simon, 1958) behavior, loosely defined here as where individuals take the first explanations which seem to fit the situation and problems currently being faced. There is also an element of self-fulfilling prophecy (Jones, 1977) active as well, “…in the sense that quick responses shape events before they have become crystallized into a single meaning […] Accuracy, in other words, is project specific and pragmatic. Judgments of accuracy lie in the path of the action” (Weick, 1995, p. 58-59). In this sense, we are concerned with whether the stories created to make sense of situations are collectively seen as believable, credible, and possible. Are they coherent? Do they hang together? The ARP was no different than other organizations in this way. PD 27 took effect on October 21, 1972, one month following the declaration of martial law. Specifically affected were tenant farmers of private agricultural lands primarily devoted to rice and corn under a system of sharecrop or lease-tenancy, whether classified as landed estate or not (MAR, 1978). A total of 22 persons from various governmental departments and the private sector were invited to contribute to the formulation of PD 27. To reconstruct the policy-making events and process during those formative years required integrating the recollected accounts of various individuals who claimed participation, as detailed in the methodology section. A reconstructed picture follows. Originally, decision-making rested with the president’s cabinet. Shortly after the declaration of martial law, President Marcos instructed the Presidential Economic Staff (PES) to prepare a position paper on agrarian reform. The Agricultural Staff of the PES and other members of the cabinet (principally the Secretaries of Agriculture, Justice, and Finance) were involved in drafting a decree that would expedite land reform. This group became the president’s Think Tank on agrarian reform. The Think Tank proposal was passed on to the MAR, which was directed to submit its own version of the plan. Within the MAR, the assignment was delegated to the director of the Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance with the concurrence of the Head Executive Assistant and other legal experts. MAR’s authority to manipulate policy was circumscribed by fixed principles determined by the president and included in the Think Tank report. Issues related to land valuation, farmer cooperatives, and limits of transferability of the land were included. In Malacanang, the Presidential Palace, President Marcos subjected all final drafts to the scrutiny of an inner circle of advisors. In-depth interviews with core PD 27 policy-making participants gave insight into which participant groups or individuals influenced various aspects of the decree. However, contributions of participants in the decision-making process made little difference in the direction of ARP—Marcos proverbially held all the cards. Plausibility was limited, credibility suffered, and organizational sensemaking was limited. Enactment “Enactment” is the label Weick (1995) applied to the tendency of people in organizations to produce a portion of the environment they face much in the way that legislators do. Indeed, the “…things designers expect will happen may predict the designs they achieve better than will their statements about what they plan to have happen” (Weick, 2001, p. 68). In the manner of a self-fulfilling prophecy (Jones, 1977), the expectations of Philippine government decision-makers led them to behave in ways that led to conditions they expected. They thus tended to enact their own environments. For example, the retention area of seven hectares, interviewees alleged, was designated as such because seven was the President’s “lucky number.” PD 27 specified the landlord’s retention limit. It stated that landowners in all cases could retain an area of not more than seven hectares if such landowner was cultivating such an area or would now cultivate it (MAR, 1978, p. 2). Perhaps in the same vein, President Marcos designated February 7, 1986 as the date for his snap election or vote of confidence. Unfortunately, this time the decision gave rise to the People Power revolution, providing a corresponding shock. Implications for Leadership In this paper we have described the circumstances under which President Marcos initiated agrarian reform under martial law. We cannot reach into the cognitive processes to understand the actions of leaders involved, but we can draw inferences from the interplay between leaders and their responses to circumstances. There is a reciprocal relationship between them (e.g., Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967b), and as Bruce (as cited in Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 723) reported, the political environment plays a particular role. Knowledge creation in organizations is context-specific, dependent upon social interactions, and dynamic (Nonaka, Toyama, & Byoière, 2003). The circumstances inferred by martial law have a direct impact on the players involved. We chose to examine the case of agrarian reform under martial law from the perspective of sensemaking for that reason. We cannot enter the sensemaking process group members used to understand their surroundings, but we can infer what was taking place from the situations faced and their responses to those situations (e.g., Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obsteld, 2005). For this purpose, we will use the thinking of Rutledge (2009) as our point of departure. Paralleling the research of Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) and Weick (1995), Rutledge (2009) qualitatively found that sensemaking potentially progresses through several stages: “…when complexity and uncertainty are high, ambiguity is great, the focus problem and/or external environment is in constant flux, the circumstances and/or focus problem is experienced by the group as disorderly or chaotic” (p. 20). The ramifications of this insight reach not only into agrarian reform, but to experiments in nation building by the U.S. in general. Rotledge’s (2009) model certainly informs leaders who routinely face complex, uncertain, and ambiguous situations where sensemaking is in play and the model apply. The model suggests that under the conditions outlined above, organizational sensemaking is a four-stage process. Sensemaking: Stage 1 As pointed out earlier, the organizational sense of equivocality is reduced through shared observations and discussion until a common grammar and course of action can be agreed upon (Daft & Weick, 2001, p. 252). Rutledge (2009) sought the collective reality associated with the aggregate understanding of individuals in Stage 1 Sensemaking. In Stage 1, individuals bracket a key question or part of the complexity as they see it and ask: “What is this about?” Here the leader is looking for patterns in the stories members tell and the words they use when voicing concerns. To borrow from word processing jargon, what do they most “copy and paste”? Leaving motivation aside, Marcos in his era did not have the electronic feedback ability to fully accomplish such a task nationally at any rate near what is available today. Certainly, the island archipelago and its people were not readily available to enter such an endeavor leaving less nuanced factors to dominate. For example, the declaration of Martial Law and the institution of PD 27 one month later resulted from the political pressure arising from tenure-related violence in the countryside. His view of tolerable peace and order was interrupted by aggressive activities of the communist New People’s Army and the continuing Muslim secessionist movement in the south. There was an account of bombings in Manila and reported landing of arms in the coast of Isabela, and the assassination attempt on the life of Minister of National Defense Juan Ponce Enrile could well have forced the hand of Marcos to declare Martial Law. At least, Martial Law was a way to silence the political opposition (Dolan, 1991) and make agrarian reform needed by the country expeditious—at least better than the slow-going, landlord-subverted R.A. 3844 in 1963 as amended by R.A. 6389 in 1971. These events certainly point to the importance of leaders adequately facilitating Stage 1 Sensemaking. This is reflected in prior American experience between 1898 and 1935. Here the Americans sought to give land to the landless, rationalize the system of land registration and the issuance of land titles, break up landed estates, and improve tenancy conditions (Bauzon, 1975). They failed because the nationals preferred to remain in community settlements rather than adopt the American pattern of homesteads, among other reasons. Sensemaking: Stage 2 In Stage 2, “Words and phrases are tried out by various members and repeated as images that may contribute to answering bracketed concerns or questions(s)” (Rutledge, 2009, p. 20). These emerge as individuals borrow (p. 23) words and phrases from others to explain their own attitudes, feelings, and observations. Here leaders should look for categorization of words, theme, and stories identified in Stage 1. Participants and leaders may be facilitated into labeling those categories and, tentatively, framing them into what we term understandings. We suggest that leaders may facilitate the sensemaking in Stage 2 by helping members shift from the notion of paradox as a label to that of paradox as a lens (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008, p. 234), altering assumptions and expanding awareness in fundamentally different ways. Simple, logical solutions do not serve the convoluted issues addressed by Marcos or leaders facing complex situations. Sensemaking: Stage 3 In Stage 3, plausible explanations or approximate stories addressing bracketed questions identified in Stage 2 emerge. These are treated as provisional in nature. In this Stage, the leader should listen for the categories and labels woven into the stories addressing the immediate concerns of group members. The emerging stories will be evidently plausible to those individuals because group members will congregate around them. Sensemaking largely leaves belief systems alone. The plausible stories told serve to mediate between differences in member viewpoints (Rutledge, 2009, p. 22). Sensemaking: Stage 4 In Stage 4, the group gathers the will to move toward a particular action. Evidence of entry into Stage 4 will be present when members add to the story lines formed in Stage 3, moving the group closer to particular goals. Here we suggest that the plausible stories created in Stage 3 provide a path/goal orientation that propels related group action. This is also important because it is in Stage 4 that mental models or frames that support subsequent sensemaking are formed. These “influence the way the world is perceived within the organization, as well as critical decisions with respect to perceived external and internal demands.” (Basu & Palazzo, 2008, p. 123). Conclusion In this paper, we have examined agrarian reform as experienced in the Philippines under martial law. We have used sensemaking as the point of departure to enhance understanding. We can conclude, from the evidence gathered, that organizational decision-making related to agrarian reform became fragmented as a result of martial law. More to the point, sensemaking requires a social context that was disrupted because decision makers were isolated one from another. The president made decisions unilaterally, with limited input from close advisors who, for the most part, made intuitive suggestions. The personal identity of the resulting groups formed as the process proceeded. However, salient cues drawn from the environment and the ability to make retrospective judgments would have been richer had others been included in the interpretation process and their observations been considered. There is little doubt in our minds that the changing personal identity of the president and the enactment of his inner circle influenced the outcome of agrarian reform. We can only speculate about whether the sensemaking of the president and his key leaders yielded plausible explanations for the direction that agrarian reform ultimately took. It was determined from this study that experiences of the Philippine government under martial law were amenable to all of the elements of sensemaking (Weick, 1995; 2001), namely: a) social context, b) personal identity, c) retrospect, d) salient cues, e) ongoing projects, f) plausibility, and g) enactment. While the experience of agrarian reform under the ARP was unique to the Philippines, the sensemaking experience common to all other organizations were present. Nuances, of course, varied from other institutions because of the behavior of President Marcos and the results of his outlook. References Arcega, V. M. (1976). Technocrats in the Philippine rice program: Middlemen in Masagana 99. Philippine Journal of Public Administration, 20(2), 123-138. Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1978). Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1996). Organizational learning: Vol. 2: Theory, methods and practice. 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