

Chapter 3

The Context of Landcare in the Philippines

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the broader context in which the Landcare Program operates. It first describes the country setting, and then outlines the problem of environmental degradation and rural poverty, and past and present efforts in natural resource management (NRM). In particular, this chapter describes the devolution of environmental management functions, and analyses the problems associated with environmental governance at the local level.

3.2. The Country Setting

3.2.1. Geography and Demography

The Philippines is an independent republic on the southeast rim of Asia (Multimedia History Company 2004). It is an archipelago of 7,000 islands, which is bounded by the Philippine Sea on the northeast, the Celebes Sea on the south, and the South China Sea on the west. Borneo is on the country's southwest border, and Taiwan lies to its north (Figure 3.1). The country has a total land area of 30 million hectares. The islands are grouped into three geographic regions, namely Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, but for administrative purposes the country is divided into 15 regions (Nation Master 2004). The terrain is mostly mountainous with narrow to extensive coastal lands and flood plains. The general land uses are as follows: 19 per cent arable lands; 12 per cent permanent crops; four per cent permanent pastures; 46 per cent forests and woodlands; and 19 per cent other uses. As a tropical area, the Philippines has two distinct seasons: the dry season from November to April and the wet season from May to October. However, this varies between different climatic zones. The average annual rainfall is around 2,000 millimetres, with temperatures ranging from 24 degrees to 31 degrees centigrade (Nation Master 2004). Elevation ranges from zero to 2,954 metres above sea level (masl).



Figure 3.1 Map of the Republic of the Philippines
Source: Primedia Company, 2004

In 2000, the country registered a population of 82 million at 2.07 per cent growth rate. The average population density was 240 persons per square kilometre. The ethnic groups consist of 91.5 per cent Christian Malay; four per cent Muslim Malay; and another four per cent Chinese and other ethnic groups (Nation Master 2004). Hence, the dominant religion is Roman Catholic. The Muslim population is concentrated in the Sulu Archipelago and in the western and central part of Mindanao, while the indigenous communities or non-hispanicised Malays are concentrated in the upper north of Luzon and in remote areas in Mindanao.¹ Ninety two per cent of the population of 10 years of age and older is literate.

3.2.2. Society and Culture

Centuries of Spanish and American occupation in the Philippines infused practices that conflicted with the indigenous Filipino culture. However, some of these indigenous cultural traits have been preserved and still loom large in the lives of Filipinos. The most common Filipino trait is hospitality where a visitor is regarded as royalty and every effort is made to make the guest comfortable. Close family ties and respect for elders and authorities are another important Filipino trait. To preserve respect and politeness, disagreeing with an elder, an older family member, or a person in authority is considered a disgrace and is an unacceptable behaviour in that context.

An important Filipino trait that is strongly ingrained in social and political relations is the moral obligation of “*utang loob*” or debt of gratitude. According to Batario (1998), in its indigenised form *utang loob* is simply an expression of an expectation that one has to be loyal or protective of the interest of a family clan. In line with this, it is also practised as a form of reciprocity, where a favour or gift given and reciprocally returned is considered a correct practice. However, when this indigenous trait is overlaid against the template of an exogenous or foreign model, there is a clash in culture and values giving rise to an inner incongruence (Batario 1998). During Spanish rule, this relation of reciprocity or *utang*

¹ The Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 defines indigenous peoples or indigenous cultural communities (IP/ICC) as those, on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country at the time of conquest or colonisation, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains (IPRA Handbook 1997).

loob was practised in the context of landlord-tenant relations. The tenant was entirely dependent on the landlord for subsistence; hence the landlord became indispensable to his existence. By perpetuating this relationship, the landlord exacted loyalty, deference and information, and a system of exchange anchored on personal relationship was created (Batario 1998).

The incongruent practice of *utang loob* gave rise to the patron-client ties or political patronage that is visible today in Philippine politics and in society in general. This patron-client relation is multifarious, asymmetrical, personal, non-contractual, and grounded in this strong reciprocal obligation or *utang loob* (Dauvergne 1997). Since colonial days, local interests, personal loyalties, and economic power have been interwoven in a dynamic called “*pulitika*” (Jutkowitz et al. 1997). In its simplest meaning, *pulitika* refers to a patron-client relationship where political power and influence is built on personal loyalties and alliances operating at various levels. For instance, getting things done at the municipal level depends on the mayor’s political influence to access financial support from a patron in the form of a senator or a provincial governor. The mayor in turn applies the same to his local constituents or clients. For example, within a municipality or province, priority attention and adequate services (e.g., livelihood projects) are given preferentially to areas that are considered the political bailiwick of the governor or mayor. Thus, a politician is a patron to his local constituents, and at the same time, a client to higher state politicians. Ultimately, politicians at different levels are regarded as patrons and the citizens as clients. Patrons form and expand their patron-client networks and regard the state as a source of political patronage.

According to Batario (1998), this provided the impetus for the eventual entrenchment of the “*padrino*” system where citizens regard the politicians as godfathers rather than legitimate representatives of government. Because of this, political commitments, often comprising personal promises, have to be realised to secure votes from clients. Hence it is common that qualified civil servants are passed over for political appointees and relatives. Nepotism and cronyism are indeed pervasive. Social exclusion and selective development are common consequences of patron-client ties, along with vote buying, coercion, and corruption. The latter has dangerously permeated the Filipino political fabric, as politicians

behave as if government were their private preserve (Batario 1998). Viewed in these terms, economic gains acquired through corrupt or legal means while in power have become the real motive of politics. It is not surprising that, with a limited term of office (six years for national level officials and three years for local officials), politicians have short planning horizons and aim to produce tangible outputs rapidly as a means of establishing success and building a political power-base. Hence, programs with longer-term impacts, such as environmental management or conservation activities, are unpopular for politicians and often given low priority. In contrast, infrastructure projects are easier to implement and provide more scope for corruption.

The potential for corruption in politics contributes to a politician's desire to retain power and to build a political dynasty, achieved through family clans and consolidated client networks. For example, in one case, the mayor helped his wife to get elected to another political position and his son to get elected to the youth council (Jutkowitz et al. 1997). In the 1997 election of youth councils, Jutkowitz et al. (1997) identified instances of youth councils serving as a political training ground for the children of governors, mayors, and vice mayors. Whether this has an advantageous effect on leadership building and sustainability of local programs is doubtful, but it is clear that it has promoted the building of political dynasties.

De la Cruz (2004) says that the existence of political dynasties limits the choice of the voters and the pace of democratisation. Baguioro (2004) writes that political dynasties still thrive in the Philippines. Based on her observations of the early results of the 2004 elections, she concludes that Philippine politics is still a family affair with politicians, their wives, and children running for public office, either with the same or rival parties. Further, Baguioro (2004) notes that two thirds of legislators are members of political clans and half of the 24 members of the Senate are from political families. Of the 48 senatorial candidates, 18 have at least one relative in an elective post while five have parents who are former senators. Given this composition of the legislature, it is not surprising that the Bill outlawing political dynasties has barely progressed since it was proposed in 1996 (Baguioro 2004). This underlies the systemic affliction of Philippine politics.

On the other hand, the Philippines has since independence enjoyed a national cohesion greater than that found in most postcolonial states (Wurfel 1991). This had its origins during the colonial period when the actions of revolutionary leaders and numerous uprisings against Spanish rule manifested a struggle for national identity and independence. In addition, an anti-American manifesto for independence had emerged before the Pacific War in the 1940s. This nationalist spirit grew among the student population in Manila in the 1970s, and attracted varying degrees of support from journalists, academics, politicians, and businessmen (Wurfel 1991). This type of collective action, though motivated by a radical-leftist perspective, strengthened the value of nationalism. Subsequent virulent mass actions or “people power” swept through the two EDSA revolutions, which removed President Marcos in 1986 and President Estrada in 2001.² Although the EDSA phenomena were not purely motivated by a sense of nationalism, they had become part of an on-going nationalising experience of the Filipino people. Clearly, for over a century, there has been a constant struggle for nationalism and national identity, which remains central to Philippine political culture.

3.2.3. Political Economy

As a nation, the Philippines struggled to gain independence from a colonial experience but emerged as a weak postcolonial state in which the practice of rent seeking defines the relations between the economic elites and the state. Rent seeking emerges because political interference with markets creates differentially advantageous positions for some persons who secure access to valuable rights (Appold & Phong 2001). In the process, markets are regulated and awarded to a favoured few, which sparks essentially political competition for such monopolies (McCoy 1998). The economic elites exchange favours with the state, and such favours are traded exclusively between these elites and state politicians.

The existence of economic elites dates back to the Spanish hacienda system. These landowning elites were cultivated as part of the United States military and political pacification program and retained control of the economy despite the democratic process

² The EDSA Revolution, also referred to as the *People Power Revolution* and the *Philippine Revolution of 1986* was a mostly non-violent mass demonstration in the Philippines. Four days of peaceful action by millions of Filipinos led to the downfall of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos and the installation of Corazon Aquino as President of the Republic (Campus Program 1996-2004).

imposed on the Philippines by the Americans (McCoy 1998). Their privileged position was directly used to advance their economic interests and to secure a flow of resources to wield political power. At the time of independence in 1946, these elite families allied with state leaders and developed a reciprocal relationship, contributing a significant share of the nation's economy through the rise of rents, as the state helped build their economic and political power. Though they were inevitably diversified by the post war emergence of new industries, their cohesion was largely preserved by a network of kinship linkages (Wurfel 1998). According to McCoy (1998), this synergistic development strengthened the economic elites as a dominant social class while weakening the state's resources and its own bureaucratic apparatus.

Under the law, the state has broad economic powers, but the Philippines' record of implementing its development schemes has been inconsistent. Elected with the support of rent-seeking political brokers, successive presidents have been forced to pay off powerful politicians with local and national benefices, thereby compromising the state's integrity and diminishing its own resources (McCoy 1998). As a result, the state is swamped with particularistic demands of powerful elite forces, which have also penetrated the bureaucracy. These particularistic interests, which have a firm independent economic base, rely heavily upon their access to the political machinery in order to promote private accumulation (McCoy 1998). Thus rent seeking capitalism has succeeded in plundering the state's own resources. As the resources have been drained from government, the state apparatus has been weakened and political families have gained strength (McCoy 1998). With little autonomy from this dominant social class, described by political analysts as Filipino oligarchs, the state has been held captive, giving rise to a selective development.

3.3. Environmental Degradation, Agricultural Decline and Rural Poverty

3.3.1. Degradation of Forest Resources

The history of deforestation in the Philippines started when the Spanish arrived in 1521 (Kummer 1992). By then, around 95 per cent of the land was still covered with forest. The forest cover declined slowly during the Spanish colonial period to 70 per cent in 1900 and was around 50 per cent in 1950 (Nelson 1996; World Bank 2002). The forest reserves were

commercially extracted from 1951. By 1968 log production peaked at over 11.6 million cubic metres and log exports accounted for around one-third of total Philippine export earnings (Dauvergne 1997). The state facilitated the exploitation of the country's forest resources by allocating the bulk of unclassified lands as public forestlands, eligible to be licensed for logging, and implemented policies of low forest charges and export taxes. By 1977, more than eight million hectares of forest area were licensed for logging. During this time, the annual deforestation rate climbed to 300 thousand hectares. Wealthy concessionaires who obtained timber licence agreements (TLA) continued exploiting the forest resources excessively until the 1980s. Hence, towards the late 1980s, the Philippines had become one of the most extensively deforested countries in the tropics, leaving only about 20 per cent forest cover (around six million hectares) (Kummer 1992). By the mid-1990s, it was commonly held that the remaining primary forests were unlikely to survive to the end of the century (Garrity et al. 1993).

In addition to these officially sanctioned logging operations, there had also been considerable illegal logging and smuggling involving top military officials. Another cause of deforestation was the practice of slash and burn farming or *kaingin*, which involves the manual clearing of a small forested area during the dry season and burning the debris just before the start of the next rainy season (Stark 2000). This is followed by the planting of a series of crops for two or three years, and then, after the soil has become depleted of nutrients, the shifting cultivator moves on to clear another piece of forestland, allowing the previous area to rejuvenate (Stark 2000). As the forest dwindles, the rich flora and fauna is threatened, especially unique fauna (e.g., primates such as the tarsier, unique bats, rats, and small mammals like the mouse deer, and the Philippine Eagle). These animals are becoming extinct or endangered as their forest habitats diminish.

As forest resources and valuable timber stocks grew scarce, and as the demand from Japan dropped sharply, log extraction declined in the 1970s, and the rate of deforestation had fallen to 150 thousand hectares (Dauvergne 1997). This significant decline was due to fewer logging concessions, selective logging, more reforestation efforts from government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and private citizens, and most of all fewer trees to cut.

3.3.2. Agricultural Decline and Rural Poverty

a. The Political Economy of Agricultural Development

Agricultural development in the Philippines began during the Spanish colonial period when export industries were developed to supply the major needs of the coloniser Spain and other European consumers for tobacco, sugar, and abaca (hemp) (Philippine Department of Agriculture 2004). During the American regime, a policy of diversification was adopted giving emphasis to the development of other agricultural products, including rice, and to fishing, forestry, and mining. However, the sugarcane haciendas prevailed; the relationship of the government with hacenderos perpetuated a political bloc, as they were few in number, controlling vast tracts of land and employing many labourers. These labourers were paid below poverty wages in order to keep the prices low enough to maintain competitive pricing in the world market (Creech & Russell 1999). Through political control, the hacenderos were able to manipulate the government to avoid land reform and wage regulations. As summarised by a report of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the government promoted agricultural exports of plantation crops that tie up substantial land assets in the hands of the few, to the detriment of landless agricultural workers who receive a small share of the returns while suffering prolonged unemployment during periods of over-supply and periodically depressed prices. In sum, the diversification policy did not materialise and the hacienda system tied the poor farmers and labourers into generations of landlessness and extreme poverty.

This agrarian structure has resulted in the current high incidence of rural poverty, which is 57 per cent among tenants and lessees and 44 per cent among owner-tillers (Azanza et al. 2001 p.157). In Western, Central and Eastern Visayas in particular, the high poverty incidence is associated with landlessness (Azanza et al. 2001). The incidence of rural poverty also stems from the low labour income in the agricultural sector (Azanza et al. 2001), dating back to the hacienda system. Hence, while half of the active labour force is in agriculture, they receive less than one third of the total value of total labour income (Azanza et al. 2001).

A plethora of agrarian reforms has been initiated from as early as the 1950s, but with poor results. For instance, the hacienderos applied for a reclassification of their lands from a purely agrarian to an agri-industrial classification before the agrarian law could have harmful effects on their huge landholdings. In some places, the agrarian reform has been turned into contract farming in order to keep rural labour operating within large-scale agricultural entities. Examples of multinational agricultural companies are Del Monte Philippines Inc. (DMPI) and Dole Philippines in the southern Philippines. These companies established large pineapple plantations on rented lands and produced more pineapples in contracted farms, and absorbed available rural labour. Poor farmers with insufficient capital are induced to lease-out their farms or engage in contract farming with these powerful agricultural companies. In both schemes, the landowner loses the right over cultivation and management practices and are bound to remain poor, since they no longer own or control the productive resources and have no influence over production factors other than their own labour. While contract farming may not necessarily entail exploitative relations, such arrangements may make autonomous farmer groups more difficult to organise.

b. Agricultural Modernisation

The Philippines remains an agricultural country despite efforts to promote industrialisation since the post-war reparation period (since 1946). Of the 30 million hectares of land, 13 million hectares are classified as suitable for conventional agriculture. In addition, about half of the land traditionally designated as forests is largely deforested and has been subject to agricultural expansion. Agriculture primarily consists of rice, corn, coconut, sugarcane, banana, livestock, poultry, and fishery production. In 1995, the agriculture sector contributed 23 per cent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Philippine Department of Agriculture 2004). In order to boost this sector, the national government adopted the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernisation Act (AFMA) in 1997, which aims to promote the modernisation of agriculture and fishery production for food security and self-sufficiency through greater participation of smallholders and the private sector (Philippine Department of Agriculture 2004). In 2003 gains in agricultural performance were observed in the livestock, poultry and fishery sub-sectors, as well as in sugarcane and banana

production. Marginal productivity increase was observed in corn, while rice, coffee and high valued crops continued to decline. According to the DA, the AFMA has a lot to offer for agricultural development, but political will and leadership of government officials at the national and local levels are needed to implement this and to make lasting improvements in the agricultural sector. Sustained expansion of the national economy thus requires a sustained growth in the agricultural sector, but lack of economies of scale, inadequate infrastructure support, lack of financing, and government policies have limited productivity gains (Creech & Russell 1999).

c. Agriculture and Population Pressure in the Uplands

It is commonly held that population pressure in the uplands poses a challenge to agricultural development.³ It causes both the expansion and intensification of farming in steep, marginal, and more erodible lands (Garrity et al. 1993; Nelson 1996). Agricultural production began to stagnate as the expanding population put pressure on the remaining unexploited cultivable land as early as the 1950s (Nelson 1996). The upland population has continued to increase dramatically within the recent decades. In 1986, Sajise estimated about five million people, while the Philippine Bureau of Forest Development reported around eight million people (Stark 2000). More recent estimates place the number of upland inhabitants at 18 million, and projections for the year 2000 suggest that 24 to 26 million people are living in upland areas (Garrity et al. 1993; Stark 2000). This results in a population density of 175 persons per square kilometre in the uplands (Garrity et al. 1993). Two thirds of this population is dependent on small farms averaging about two hectares, used for subsistence and commercial production, and on gathering of forest products. In 1988, 60 per cent of farms in the uplands were less than three hectares, 25 per cent were between three to five hectares, and the remaining 15 per cent were more than five hectares (Philippine Department of Agriculture 2004; Subere 2003). Between 1988 and 2003, the proportion of small farms continued to expand due to increasing population and the

³ The Philippine Department of Environment of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has defined upland areas in the Philippines as landscapes of slopes equal or greater than 18 per cent including the table land and plateaus lying at higher elevations which are not normally suited to wet rice (Stark 2000 p. 26). However, there is inconsistency on what constitutes an upland area, depending on the agency or the kind of project involved (Sajise & Ganapin 1990 p. 35). Nonetheless, Cruz & Cruz (1990) estimates the upland area to be 55 per cent of the total land area of the Philippines (Stark 2000 p. 26).

expansion of large-scale corporate farming in the uplands. Most upland farmers have engaged in environmentally destructive forms of economic behaviour because they have no alternative economic opportunities (Kummer 1984).

Historically, the rural uplands had relatively low populations and were politically and economically marginal, but improved infrastructure has linked these regions much more closely with the national economy, so they have grown faster within the past few decades than the overall population (Coxhead & Buenavista 2001; Scherr et al. 2001). Consequently, the cultivated areas for agriculture expanded by a magnitude three times more than the cultivated area in 1903 (Sicat 2003). Coxhead & Buenavista (2001) add that settlement and cultivation at the frontier were driven primarily by demographic change through rapid population growth and internal migration. Based on data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 1995, the impact of population pressure on arable lands in the Philippines is very high in terms of hectares per capita (Scherr 1999b). As settled farming populations have sought to intensify production on steeply sloping lands, often with poor soils, rural poverty has become more concentrated (Scherr 1999a; 1999b).

d. Soil Degradation and Agricultural Decline

Sajise and Ganapin (1990) stress that soil degradation is the most prevailing environmental issue associated with current agricultural development in the Philippines (Stark 2000). Of the 13 million hectares of cropland, about nine million hectares, mostly upland areas, were eroded in the early 1980s and extensive erosion has occurred over 75 per cent of all the non-public lands (Stark 2000). Erosion from cultivated land using traditional ploughing up and down the slope has produced measured rates of erosion of 100 tons per hectare per year (PCCARD 1992). The Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC) (Environmental Science for Social Change 1999) reports that 5.2 million hectares of uplands are severely eroded, with the southern Philippines (Mindanao) having the biggest share of the severely eroded areas.

The soils in the southern Philippines are deep (more than two metres) and, with the exception of some limestone soils, extreme weathering tends to leave the soils with very low fertility (Garrity et al. 1993). Corn yields have been observed to decline by as much as

300 to 700 kilograms per hectare per year in sloping areas where no soil conservation has been practiced (Fujisaka & Cenas 1989; Mercado & Garrity 2000). Dregne (1992) concluded from a literature review that there was strong presumptive evidence of permanent soil productivity loss of at least 20 per cent in the Philippines due to human-induced water erosion (Scherr 1999a). Hence, land management systems are needed that improve and sustain yields, while intensifying cropping to increase total annual productivity and at the same time reduce production costs to enhance profitability (Garrity et al. 1998).

e. Rural Poverty in the Uplands

Agricultural decline was also caused by changes in economic patterns. Agricultural production has failed to stimulate economic development in rural areas because agricultural income growth has been confined to a handful of commodities produced in large-scale commercial plantations such as bananas, coconut, and sugarcane (Nelson 1996). Emphasis on capital-intensive plantation farming and processing tend to marginalise smallholders, as they have been generally less favoured by subsidised credit, infrastructure, and marketing support.

Clearly, decades of uncontrolled logging, slash and burn farming in marginal upland areas, and agricultural expansion have stripped the forests, with serious ecological problems. Degradation of many key environmental resources—notably forests, water, and biodiversity has been associated with upland development, threatening local livelihoods as well as environmental values important nationally and internationally (Scherr et al. 2001). With population pressure, changes in economic patterns imposed by global market competition, and low production, the upland communities are trapped within a vicious cycle of rural poverty. Seventy five per cent of all rural families lived below the poverty line in the 1980s and the average rural income was only 40 per cent of average urban income (Nelson 1996). In fact, it has been the poverty of the expanding rural population that has been the main cause of land degradation in the uplands (David 1988).

David (1988) argues that land degradation in the form of soil erosion is not only caused by poverty, it contributes to poverty. As the land is degraded, productivity declines and

incomes fall. According to Nelson (1996), this downward spiral is hard to break without external assistance. The upland farmers have often been blamed for environmental degradation due to their lack of a conservation ethic (Boada 1988). Nelson (1996) says that this could be based on the apparent exploitative farming practices of farmers, but argues that this is understandable given the lack of incentive to practice soil conservation due to the cycle of poverty and skewed patterns of economic development. Hence, even though government and international development agencies have instituted conservation programs, deforestation and declining productivity remain severe problems.

3.4 Past and Current Efforts in Natural Resources Management

Parallel to the on-going plunder of forest resources and agricultural decline are government efforts for rehabilitation. Rebugio and Chiong-Javier (1995) classified the evolution of community forestry into three stages. First is the pioneering period from 1971 to 1980. This saw the adoption of three major people-oriented forestry programs, namely, the Forest Occupancy Management (FOM), the Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR), and the Communal Tree Farm (CTF) Program. These programs centred on people's involvement in reforestation activities, but they were seen more as providers of labour rather than partners in forest conservation (Pulhin & Dizon 2003). This period saw community forestry as a form of counterinsurgency measure to maintain political stability in the countryside. Nonetheless, it was during this period that the forestry sector realised that the problem of deforestation was not merely technical but socio-political in nature (Pulhin & Dizon 2003).

From 1981 to 1989 was the period of integration and consolidation, which marked the adoption of another two people-oriented forestry programs. These were the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) and the Community Forestry Program (CFP). This period also saw the growing recognition that poverty alleviation, equity in resource allocation, and forest sustainability can be simultaneously achieved through community forestry, giving emphasis to the use of participatory planning approaches. The ISFP consolidated the three earlier programs with an expanded goal, namely, to improve the socio-economic conditions of forest occupants and communities dependent on forestland for their livelihood, and to protect and improve the quality of the environment (Gerrits 1996). The ISFP primarily

focused on promotion of soil conservation and agroforestry technologies through technical training, provision of material incentives, community organising, and issuance of Certificate of Stewardship Contracts (CSC) for a period of 25 years (renewable thereafter) to individual forest occupants and communities. This period also marked the simultaneous promotion of the Sloping Agricultural Land Technologies (SALT) by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and DA throughout the country. The CFP on the other hand, extended the coverage of community forestry to natural forests and community-based forest management (Pulhin & Dizon 2003).

The third period, from the 1990s to the present, is the expansion and institutionalisation period, characterised by the growth of community forestry, covering degraded watersheds and all types of forests where there are indigenous cultural communities. This period also marked increasing support for rehabilitation efforts of government from international funding agencies, including the World Bank, ADB, GTZ, and the Ford Foundation. During this period, concerns on land tenure and poverty alleviation led to the creation of various tenure instruments, development of diverse income-generating technologies, and various institutional arrangements, which were intended to lead to the development and empowerment of local groups. The different programs that emerged in the previous two periods were integrated and unified into one umbrella program, known as the Community Based Forest Management Program (CBFMP). The CBFMP is now the government's major strategy towards people-oriented forest management in conjunction with the provisions of the Local Government Code (discussed in the succeeding section).

Parallel efforts to promote sustainable agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) were also initiated by the DA and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). In addition, 78 academic institutions, non-government organisations (NGOs) and peoples' organisations (POs) from different parts of the country have formed a coalition to provide agroforestry extension, land tenure, and marketing services to upland communities (Scherr et al. 2001). Apart from government and NGO initiatives, many grassroots initiatives for NRM are also flourishing in some parts of the country (Scherr et al. 2001).

However, despite growing levels of assistance and some local successes, poor NRM and associated degradation problems persist. Forest degradation has continued, despite the emphasis on community forestry (Pulhin 1996). Geollegue (1990) found that most ISF projects were unsustainable. Gerrits (1996) identified two major failures of the ISF program. The first was the failure to utilise bottom-up and participatory approaches in the extension system. The second was the inability to recognise and respond to failures caused by lack of a farming systems approach and a blanket promotion of technologies with narrow recommendations across all the sites.

An Australian-funded review on extension in the Philippines in 2000 revealed that the problem with slow uptake and scaling up of good practices is constrained by a poor extension program in the different agencies (Hassall and Associates International 2000). The DA perceived extension shortcomings as largely caused by insufficient training of extension officers and a poor communication program. The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) also diagnosed the main extension problem as poor links between extension and research (Hassall and Associates International 2000). Investments in training agency technicians and field staff, even by foreign-funded projects, have not kept up with the demand for effective extension work. Moreover, even the more successful NGOs are finding they have limited capacity for expansion without losing their strength at the grassroots level (Cramb et al. 2000a). The national program thrusts are also consistently changing as a result of unstable political and administrative leadership at the national level. This results in discontinuities and aggravates poor spread and scaling up of promising initiatives.

3.5 Philippine Democratic Governance

The inability of the state to deliver improved public services in the face of the burgeoning political, economic, and social problems contributed to a shift in the paradigm of state governance in the late 1980s, emphasising a shift in political power away from central government. This reflected both the upsurge in democratic movements in the post-Marcos era and the general shift in international development thinking at that time. The 1987 Philippine Constitution was drafted right after the People's Power Revolution that established the Aquino Administration in 1986. The Constitution upholds local autonomy

and considers local governments as important partners in nation building (Celestino et al. 1998). Section 2 of Article X highlights the territorial and political autonomy of local governments (Celestino et al. 1998). The Constitution acknowledges the important role of civil society and mandates the setting up of mechanisms to increase public participation in governance (Tapales et al. 1996). Furthermore, in Section 3 of Article X, the Constitution mandates the enactment of a Local Government Code: “The Congress shall enact a Local Government Code which shall provide for a more responsive and accountable local government structure instituted through a system of decentralization”. Through the passage of the Local Government Code in 1991, the government has instituted a democratisation and decentralisation process, characterised by reforms in political and administrative structures and civil society participation.

3.5.1. The Local Government Code

After centuries of centralised governance, the Local Government Code (LGC), which provides major structural adjustments in the Philippine Administrative System, has thrust local governments to the forefront of the development process. The LGC gives substance to the decentralisation and local autonomy that the 1987 Constitution mandates. It aims to provide “genuine and meaningful local autonomy” to local governments to enable them to attain their fullest development potential as self reliant communities and make them more effective partners in the attainment of national goals (Tapales et al. 1996). It consolidates the Local Government Code of 1983, the Local Tax Code, and the Property Tax Code. Additionally, local government units (LGUs) are vested with the power to create and broaden their own sources of revenue and the right to a just share in national taxes and an equitable share of the proceeds of national wealth (Manasan 2001).

Civil society participation in all aspects of local governance is also an important feature of the LGC. The LGC has expanded the role of local governments in the delivery of basic public services and local economic development, and enhanced their power to mobilise resources and generate revenue (Celestino et al. 1998; Cuaresma & Ilago 1996; Tapales et al. 1996). The Code advocates decentralisation because local governments are close to the people. Hence, they are in the best position to assess the changing demands of communities and respond to them in a manner such that local priorities and capacities are

considered (Celestino et al. 1998). At the same time, the devolution of powers to local governments has presented the officials with challenges as well as opportunities. In areas where reliance on natural resources as a source of income remains high, local governments face a tension between economic growth and environmental management; their response to this on-going challenge determines the sustainability of both local and national development (Coxhead & Buenavista 2001).

a. *Structure of Local Government Units (LGUs)*

The Philippines has a unitary form of government with a multi-tiered structure and a bicameral legislature composed of a Senate and House of Representatives. At the top level, central government operates through line agencies such as the DA. LGUs constitute the second tier of government, comprising three layers provinces, municipalities and cities, and villages or *barangays*, the smallest politically organised unit. For administrative purposes, a barangay is divided into sub-villages or zones called *sitio* or *puroks*. The *sitio* or *purok* is a geographic unit or neighbourhood, normally with 20 to 60 households.

Each level of LGU is headed by an elected chief executive (governor, mayor, and barangay captain respectively), and has a legislative body or *sanggunian* composed of council members. The *sanggunian* members are called *kagawads*. Sitio officials are either elected or appointed among the residents to liaise with barangay officials, but their services are often purely voluntary, though some rich barangays provide incentives. All elected officials have a three-year term of office. To a large extent, each level of LGU is autonomous, although provincial government exercises some degree of supervision over the lower level LGUs (municipalities) in terms of budgeting, legislation, and implementation of special projects (Manasan 2001).

Each *sanggunian* level (province, cities/municipalities, barangays) has a committee for environmental management and agricultural development, usually composed of two members and a chairperson. These committees are in charge of policy formulation, budgeting, and promoting programs. With some help from concerned local line-agencies, the committee prepares an annual investment plan for approval by the *sanggunian*. Thus, the *sanggunian* plays an important role in sectoral development.

The Constitution gives LGUs a dual character, as a political subdivision of the national government and as an independent corporate body representing their constituents (Celestino et al. 1998; Cuaresma & Ilago 1996). The power of LGUs to levy taxes emanates from its political character while their corporate character authorises them to generate non-tax revenues such as regulatory or permit fees, service fees, and user charges and receipts from local economic enterprise. The LGUs can impose fees and charges commensurate to the services they render (Celestino et al. 1998; Cuaresma & Ilago 1996).

b. Local Government Funding and Resource Generation

After devolution, the problem that LGUs face is financing the delivery of public services and their development projects. LGU financing is a serious problem considering the increasing level of demand for public services and the limited funds that are currently available to them (Hondrade 2003).

The main source of LGU funding is its share in the proceeds of national tax revenues through the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) scheme. The IRA is a fixed share of central government internal revenue tax collections, which is transferred as a block grant from the central government to LGUs (Manasan 2001). It is then allocated to different levels of LGU according to a predetermined formula based on population (50 per cent), land area (25 per cent) and equal sharing (25 per cent). By equal sharing, LGUs are uniformly appropriated with a 25 per cent share of the IRA. However, several authors argue that this is an overly simplistic formula. The flaw here is that it does not consider such relevant LGU needs as funding support for the development efforts of rural communities, or even recognise the fact that more affluent urban LGUs may need less national government funding because they are able to collect more local taxes than rural LGUs do. According to Manasan (2002), this IRA allocation system creates a disincentive for the LGUs' local resource mobilisation efforts. Two of the criticisms are lower priority given to rural communities and the inadequacy of the IRA to fully finance LGU development projects (Hondrade 2003). The bias to urban areas in the revenue allotment system has further widened the urban-rural fiscal gap (Celestino et al. 1998). Also, the internal revenue allotment alone is not enough to finance the operating and capital expenditure requirements of LGUs.

The second source of local funding is through local tax collections, which are mostly derived from real property taxes. In addition, a portion of LGU tax receipts is derived from local business taxes. There is a plethora of tax levies that LGUs could utilise, but central government legislation puts limits on tax rates. As a whole, the bulk of the productive tax base is in the hands of central government, while many LGUs have not fully utilised their revenue-generating powers.

The other under utilised source of LGU funding is the 40 per cent share in the proceeds of national wealth, which covers the utilisation and development of national resources within their local jurisdiction. Some non-traditional revenue generating schemes defined in the Code have not also been fully explored by most LGUs. These involve private sector participation and include schemes such as (1) Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT), (2) management contracts, (3) franchising, and (4) establishment of private enterprise.

It has been recognised that funding shortage is one of the reasons for poor delivery of basic services in rural areas, but even in urbanising areas LGUs cannot cope with population growth and urbanisation, also resulting in poor public services. Manasan (1999) studied how LGU expenditures adjust to these pressures and found a negative correlation between population growth and urbanisation on the one hand and per capita expenditure on public services on the other. Hence, fund limitation is a common reason why most LGUs fail to undertake development projects or fund non-mandated activities in their localities. This situation limits their creativity in the exercise of genuine autonomy.

c. Civil Society Participation in Democratic Governance

An important feature of the LGC is citizen participation in local planning and development. It has been recognised that genuine democratic governance is only achieved with greater public participation in all forms of development. The LGC's key tool for promoting popular participation is the incorporation of representatives of non-government organisations (NGOs) and people's organisation (POs) into local development councils (LDC) (Jutkowitz et al. 1997). The LGC requires that one-fourth of the membership of the LDC must come from NGOs accredited by the local council (GOLD 2001). These councils are mandated to undertake annual planning, formulate investment programs, and monitor

outcomes. Although the reality in most cases has been far different, these councils have provided a platform for cooperative planning between local governments and civil society representatives.

In addition, interested local groups could get an accreditation with the LGU to establish linkage, support and coordination. Formalised local groups, associations, or cooperatives are also encouraged to register with authorised registering bodies (e.g. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Cooperative Development Authorities (CDA) to obtain a legal personality. This process is particularly important for groups who seek financial support from government or private entities (e.g. banks), though many have criticised this system as it entails high transaction costs.

Undoubtedly, effective local organisations can be a vehicle to increase local government accountability and transparency. Jutkowitz et al. (1997) said that in the absence of strong local governments, civil society organisations can fill the void in holding government accountable. However, they maintain that this would require them to extend their roles in local politics, even endorsing candidates for local office and generating voter support for their candidates.

The proliferation of NGOs in the Philippines has also contributed to the process of democratic governance. According to Rood (n.d) some 48 per cent of Filipinos belong to at least one organisation. His assessment of developing countries revealed that the number of NGOs at the national and local level was much greater compared to the rest of Southeast Asia. Rood (n.d) concludes that the Philippines has a strong civil society that can play a significant role in the development process.

3.6. Environmental Governance

3.6.1. Environmental Governance Prior to Devolution

The Philippine political context described earlier in this chapter gave rise to a “command and control” strategy in environmental governance, in which environmental policies, rules and regulations were imposed on individual citizens, industries, and private organisations. In particular, the formulated forest policies promoted a highly regulatory, centrally

controlled and industry-biased approach to forest management (Pulhin 1996; Pulhin & Dizon 2003). Such policies were developed to place access and control of the country's forest resources in the hands of the elites, who had the finances and political connections to exploit these resources commercially (Pulhin & Dizon 2003). Based on political patronage, the government issued forest concessions and logging licences to the elites, who thus held much of the control of natural resources and environmental wealth. Meanwhile, the uneducated and less privileged majority, particularly the upland communities, were barred from enjoying the benefits of the utilisation of the national patrimony (Pulhin & Dizon 2003). Many top ranking politicians and their cronies also owned timber companies. Extensive ties between senior state officials and these timber companies distorted management and drove destructive and excessive logging (Dauvergne 1997).

The DENR was and remains the primary agency responsible for the conservation, management, development and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources, including those in reservations, watershed areas, and lands of the public domain, as well as the licensing and regulation of all resource utilisation activities (Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources 2004). The central office controlled decision-making, funding, and project management but, with limited funds to support forest development projects, DENR's work was more regulatory than developmental. With the clientelist ties established between state officials and the elites, the supervision of government implementers and their capacity to enforce regulations was seriously weakened.

The plunder of forest resources can be traced to various factors, such as conversion of forest lands for agricultural uses, commercial and illegal logging, and the pressure of population growth (Pulhin & Dizon 2003), but the most important source of this problem, according to Vitug (2000), was the influence of political power and vested interests on forest management policies and decisions, as well as on their implementation. The deployment of such power in the Philippine forests has contributed to the greatest forest plunder in the tropical world (Pulhin 1996). Thus, the command and control strategy in environmental governance supported a culture of corruption and selective development.

3.6.2. Devolution of Environmental Management and Agricultural Extension

An important feature of the LGC is the devolution of functions previously discharged by central government agencies to LGUs. Major responsibilities for basic services like maternal and child health, primary health care, nutrition, environmental sanitation, agriculture, infrastructure, and social welfare were transferred to local chief executives. The devolution is substantial, not only in the sheer number of functions that were shifted but more so in terms of the number of personnel transferred, and the corresponding reductions implied in the budgets of affected national government agencies (Manasan 2001).

Upon devolution, some DENR personnel were devolved to the provincial level to assist the LGUs in performing their devolved functions, but were not directly under the LGUs' supervision. Regional field offices are maintained and supervision of devolved personnel is retained within the regions. In effect, this process is more appropriately termed "deconcentration" rather than devolution. As shown in

Table 3.1, the DENR devolved the least number of personnel, less than four per cent, compared to 50 per cent in other agencies (Manasan 2001). As part of the devolved functions, the LGUs are to support projects funded by national and international agencies within their locality through partnership and cost-sharing schemes. This left the LGUs with serious financial deficits, resulting in low quantity and quality of extension services.

Table 3.1 Number of Devolved Personnel, 1992

Department/Agency	Number of Personnel Before Devolution	Number of Devolved Personnel	Ratio of Devolved Personnel to Pre-Devolution Personnel (per cent)
Department of Agriculture	29,638	17,673	59.63
Office of the Secretary	29,234	27,664	60.42
National Meat Inspection Commission	404	9	2.23
Department of Budget and Management	3,532	1,650	46.72
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	21,320	895	4.20
Department of Health	74,896	45,896	61.28
Department of Social Welfare & Development	6,932	4,144	59.78
Other Executive Offices	191	25	13.09
Philippine Gamefowl Commission	191	15	13.09
Total	136,509	70,283	51.49

Source: Manasan 2001

On the other hand, the DA is the principal government agency responsible for the promotion of agricultural development. It provides the policy framework, helps direct public investments, conducts research, and in partnership with LGUs provides support services necessary to make agriculture a profitable enterprise and helps to spread the benefits of development to the rural poor. The DA was heavily affected by the devolution of personnel compared to DENR (

Table 3.1). Many personnel were devolved to the LGUs, but regional field offices were retained under the management of the central office. These offices are based in each of the 15 regions to provide technical assistance to LGUs and to continue to implement nationally funded projects. The devolution of functions and personnel required the creation of agricultural extension offices at provincial, city, and municipal levels. As a result, LGUs have to pay the salaries of devolved personnel and finance agricultural development and environmental management projects.

3.6.3. Civil Society Participation in Environmental Management

In the Philippines, political recognition of the legitimacy and rights of upland land users began in the 1970s. Their presence and participation was legitimised through various policy initiatives. For instance, the Upland Development Program of the 1980s featured a “participatory” philosophy (Scherr et al. 2001). Democratic organisation and action grew in the years leading up to the overthrow of Marcos and accelerated thereafter (Scherr et al. 2001). In line with the reconciliation process initiated by the Aquino government in 1986, civil society institutions proliferated, and by the passage of the LGC in 1991, many of them acquired a legal status as autonomous entities and gained state recognition as important partners of development. Many civil society groups, including environmental NGOs, have successfully formed into alliances and generated a critical mass to challenge the monopoly of environmental governance.

By the 1990s, cultural minorities gained de facto rights over the control of environmental assets within their ancestral domain, and in 1997, the Indigenous People’s Rights Act (IPRA) was enacted. The IPRA is an act that recognises, protects, and promotes the rights of indigenous cultural communities. The IPRA envisions promoting and enhancing the

protection and management of national parks with respect to customary beliefs and laws of indigenous peoples living within the area.

Scherr et al. (2001) studied local organisations in Southeast Asia (including the Philippines) and found that they are especially important for managing natural resources that are common property or public goods, and innovations that have economies of scale or require collective action. Gollin & Kho (2002) add that the management of natural resources has intractable links with local communities dependent on these resources. He adds that the strong connection between the environment and people has led to civic political action, and demands for redress of environmental problems have become a pathway to more participatory governance.

In the Philippines, local organisations involved in NRM are varied, including indigenous communities, water watch groups, organic farmers, conservation groups, and market-oriented groups. Most of these groups are organised by external organisations such as NGOs, but the DENR has been in the forefront of federating POs at the regional level, with 15 CBFM federations organised in 2000 (Chiong-Javier 2001; Scherr et al. 2001). The increasing activity of local organisations in local, provincial and national policy has drawn the attention and sometimes the support of politicians, who recognise the potential role of federations, whether government-organised or independent, in mobilising rural voters (Scherr et al. 2001). In some cases, local governments have provided support to local organisations through technical assistance, creation of ordinances that provide incentives for conservation, inviting their participation in a municipal level council for environmental concerns, providing tenure security, allocating forest management responsibility to interested user groups, establishing agroforestry programs, and providing financial and technical support for tree farms (Chiong-Javier 2001; Scherr et al. 2001). It is clear that such development of local organisations in NRM was an outcome of greater political space for local action and empowerment, with broader political openings, and leadership and support from external NGOs (Scherr et al. 2001).

However, sustaining active involvement of civil society groups or local organisations in the development process poses a major challenge. Depending on their objective, many local organisations easily come and go. According to Scherr et al. (2001), there is potential to

extend the presence of local groups and their initiatives, their scope, and effectiveness through better policies and organisational support. Government agencies and NGOs working in this area have yet to make necessary philosophical and practical transitions in order to include the marginalised upland communities (Scherr et al. 2001).

In the Philippines, community organising, undertaken mostly by NGOs, has spanned more than 20 years. According to Francisco (1997), NGOs are in a better position, given their close links with the grassroots, to evaluate development strategies and link up with national and global trends, but the challenge is in scaling up development activities of NGOs and in enhancing popular participation and influencing governance. In particular, the challenge remains how to do this in a way that is sustainable.

3.6.4. Problems in Environmental Governance

The implementation of the LGC was not without problems. Studies conducted by the Local Government Academy (1998) revealed that LGUs had three main concerns that were deterrent to the exercise of the political and corporate powers described in the LGC. These were: (1) inadequate share of IRA; (2) lack of general understanding of the Code; and (3) the need to enhance the management capabilities of LGUs, including in many cases the level of preparedness of elective officials to exercise corporate powers. In brief, the LGUs were stifled in their ability to perform their devolved functions due to the influence of the pre-Code system. Some specific constraints to environmental governance were identified by the Local Government Academy and are discussed below.

a. Ambiguity in the Delineation of Devolved Functions and Expenditure Assignment

According to Manasan (2001), although the LGC devolved many functions related to environmental management to LGUs, ambiguities remain. Under the Operative Principles of Decentralisation (Section 3 of the LGC), the LGC provides that “LGUs shall share with the National Government the responsibility in the management and maintenance of ecological balance within their territorial jurisdiction, subject to the provisions of the Code and national policy”. This provision results in selective devolution and ambiguity in the devolved functions. For instance, LGUs are given responsibility over community-based forest and watershed projects, but DENR retains its supervision and control over such

projects. It also encourages the continued involvement of DENR in functions assigned to LGUs by allowing the department to implement and retain control over foreign funded projects and those that are funded by the national government under the General Appropriations Act (Catacutan 2001d; Manasan 2001). Given this, DENR tends to direct LGU activities towards national goals since it is made accountable for project outcomes. Consequently, public accountability is unclear to LGUs and to DENR. Thus, a major bottleneck of the Code is that it transfers the service responsibility to LGUs but not the appropriate authority (Manasan 2001).

Another problem is that the creation of a local Environment and Natural Resource Office (ENRO) is optional under the Code. Relatedly, the Department of Budget Management (DBM) excludes environmental expenditures from the LGU budgeting guidelines. Consequently, the creation of an ENRO and the corresponding environmental expenditures are held under the discretion of the mayor or governor. This has limited LGUs, particularly low-income municipalities, in performing the devolved functions and initiating local NRM programs.

Meanwhile, the devolution of agricultural extension puts pressure on LGUs to allocate funds for personnel salaries and agricultural development projects. The most common issue is the low quantity and quality of extension services due to sheer lack of personnel and budget. The reason for this is that LGUs are unable to allocate sizeable funding for agricultural development because physical development (especially roads) and social services are soaking up public investments. LGUs have to rely on the DA for their projects, since it also implements special projects through its regional offices. LGUs, then, are passive recipients of nationally driven programs, limiting their ability to initiate their own programs. Another important source of funding projects is the Country-wide Development Funds (CDF) of senators and congressmen, as well as higher-level LGU politicians such as governors and provincial council members. However, access to financial support depends on political connections. This system dampens the spirit of initiative on the part of LGU administrators and strengthens patron-client ties.

Some national policies and programs are also in conflict with environmental goals. For instance, the production of temperate high-value vegetables is promoted in previously designated buffer zones in protected areas. Cultivation in these fragile steep slopes accelerates soil degradation, promotes forest encroachment, and is in conflict with protected area management objectives. Often, conflicting policies and their unintended effects create confusion, misinterpretation, and complacency on the part of LGU administrators.

b. Lack of Technical and Managerial Capability

The responsibilities embodied in the Code for LGU administrators are enormous, particularly for local chief executives who were brought up in a system where, traditionally, local officials were only expected to implement pre-planned projects and give dole-outs to residents. After decades of dependence on national government, it is hard to expect these local officials easily to acquire technical and administrative capability in economic planning and budgetary management (Local Government Academy 1998).

Manasan (2001) found that the lack of technical capability in NRM at the local level stemmed primarily from three factors. First, the limited number of personnel devolved to LGUs caused a severe shortage of technical expertise at the local level. In the case of agricultural extension offices, the LGUs have great difficulty in increasing the number of technicians due to budget constraints. Second, since the creation of an ENRO is optional, LGUs prefer not to hire an ENR officer, much less to deploy adequate staff to their ENROs because of the magnitude of funding requirement for this purpose. Third, LGUs have little access to the technical resources of DENR because all line functions are appropriated by the regional and field offices of DENR, while technical functions and the concomitant specialised knowledge and skills are lodged in the staff bureaus at the central office (Manasan 2001).

c. Political Dynamics and Administrative Culture

According to a USAID report (1997), the Philippines has taken a major step towards more autonomous, responsive, and accountable local government, and broader participation by citizens at the local level, but traditional political values and administrative behaviours hold

the country back from full-scale democratic local governance (Jutkowitz et al. 1997). There are many factors contributing to this problem, of which four are briefly discussed here.

First, the fundamental difficulty in building democratic local governance in the Philippines lies in the complicated relationship between local and national officials, local elites and the citizens (Jutkowitz et al. 1997). As discussed earlier in this chapter, this is grounded in the indigenous value of reciprocity or *utang loob*, giving rise to political patronage and clientilism, which then became ingrained in the political world and in society in general. Such political culture gave rise to the perplexity of the Philippine bureaucracy.

Second, the perplexity of public administration is deepened when positive Filipino cultural traits and values like *hiya* (shame), *pakikisama* (getting along), *pakikipagkapwa* (human relations), and close family ties, which are sources of Filipino pride, are negatively operationalised within the bureaucracy (Varela 1996). For instance, the value of close family ties is used as a basis for nepotism in public employment. This is aggravated by the practice of political partisanship and interference, ingrained in administrative and political systems (Varela 1996). Batario (1998) adds that because of political patronage and nepotism, many government agencies are replete with unqualified employees paid with starvation wages who turn to corruption not only to increase their take-home pay but because everybody else is engaged in bribe-taking. Batario (1998) notes that bribes act as incentive bonuses for officials and employees who have little incentive to do their jobs. This is perpetuated within the funding disbursement system that was deliberately left with enough loopholes to give way for corrupt officials to manipulate corrupt opportunities. This is one instance where systemic corruption gains a firm foothold in the very structure of government (Batario 1998).

Third, there is a tension between politics and public administration because politicians behave as if public administration is a political affair, if not a family affair. As discussed earlier, political families and dynasties continue to thrive, strengthening their patron-client networks and their political influence on public administration. In turn, political and administrative systems operating on political patronage promote a process of selective development. This inhibits such bureaucratic values as rationality, efficiency,

effectiveness, responsiveness, equity, and participation enshrined in the western organisational model of Weberian bureaucracy (Varela 1996).

Fourth, the Philippine administrative system is constantly subjected to modifications and changes, particularly when a new political leader takes over the reins of government (Varela 1996). Obviously, these changes are strongly influenced by the values and behavioural norms of the political leadership. Every new administration gives fresh impetus to an old-age struggle between change and continuity, between political leadership and bureaucratic power (Varela 1996). Any newly elected government official comes to office distrusting the bureaucracy (Pfiffner 1987). According to Varela (1996), this distrust, sometimes bordering on hostility, arises from the new administration's perception that the bureaucracy is filled with holdovers from the previous administration who are unsympathetic to the new priorities of the new administration. This brings political instability and tension, which in turn affect the stability and continuity of public service represented by the bureaucracy.

In an evaluation study of local democratic governance in the Philippines, Jutkowitz et al. (1997) conclude that the challenges to democracy are far more difficult to resolve than the challenges to governance, which basically involves greater inclusion of citizens and development mechanisms for fair political competition, accountability, and transparency. Although, the LGC is an important tool for meeting these challenges, formidable barriers remain, starting with the personal, family-based, and patron-client systems subsumed under the concept of *pulitika* (Jutkowitz et al. 1997). Finally, they say that the Code makes local efforts for democratisation possible by ensuring that local governments have the resources and legal framework to develop a more participatory and effective government, but it has not eliminated *pulitika* with its mechanisms of control at the ballot box and through political patronage.

3.7 Conclusion

From a democratic environmental governance perspective, the timing of the Landcare Program in the Philippines was propitious. Redress of environmental problems and accelerated rural development are at the forefront of the policy agenda. Changes in

administrative and political institutions engendered by the devolution process, and the growing emphasis on demand-driven and grassroots involvement in all aspects of development have provided the Landcare Program a favourable policy, institutional, and social context within which to work. In addition, greater legitimacy for upland people, foreign donor assistance, and cooperation of local governments and NGOs in NRM have intersected to encourage rapid growth of local organisations. Ultimately, a program emphasising sustainable management of natural resources was likely to be welcomed at central and local government levels as it coincides with the thrust of local and national development.