

# Land, power, and poverty: agrarian transformation and political conflict in Central America.

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## Land, power, and poverty: agrarian transformation and political conflict in Central America.

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Abstract : The extraordinary concentration of land ownership and the entrenched position of a small but powerful land-based elite have long been regarded by reformers and revolutionaries in Central America as primary causes of the impoverishment of the rural majority and as fundamental obstacles to the s

development of their societies. Agrarian issues such as land use and distribution consequently been central to the political rhetoric and platforms of progressive movements and to their policies. The book analyses the relationship between social structures and political turmoil in Central America. The development of the unequal structures of rural Central American society, the challenge in recent decades to those structures by a restive peasantry, and the role in these conflicts of the governments of the region's five countries are all discussed. The first section discusses the transformation in rural Central America after World War II as a result of the spread of commercial, especially export, agriculture. The opening of new markets, technological innovations and the increased availability of credit have brought about substantial changes in traditional agricultural structures and practices in recent decades. Increasing linkages with the international economy, including the role of foreign aid in promoting the agrarian transformation, are discussed. The agrarian transformation has changed the lives of most rural people in Central America. The two major agrarian changes in social relations: economic transformation and outside organizers: religious and development workers and revolutionary guerillas, are examined. The role played by the USA in agrarian politics in recent decades is also documented.

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