

# Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

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## CBRM Database

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<b>Case Study Name:</b>	The shifting ground of swidden agriculture on Palawan Island, the Philippines		
<b>Authors:</b>	Dressler, W., Pulhin, J		
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<b>Region:</b>	Southeast Asia		
<b>Country:</b>	Philippines		
<b>Ecosystem Type:</b>	Tropical rain forest		
<b>Social Characteristics:</b>	Remote community		
<b>Scale of Study:</b>	regional		
<b>Resource Type:</b>	agriculture		
<b>Type of Initiative:</b>	Research driven project		
<b>Community Based Work:</b>	Resource management		
<b>Keywords:</b>	The Philippines, swidden, slash-and-burn, agrarian transition, indigenous persistence		

**Summary:**

Recent literature describing the process and pathways of the agrarian transition in Southeast Asia suggests that the rise of agricultural intensification and the growth of commodity markets will lead to the demise of swidden agriculture. This paper offers a longitudinal overview of the conditions that drive the agrarian transition amongst indigenous swidden cultivators and migrant paddy farmers in central Palawan Island, the Philippines. In line with regional agrarian change, we describe how a history of conservation policies has criminalized and pressured swidden farmers to adopt more intensive “modern” agricultural practices. We examine how indigenous swidden cultivators adjust their practice in response to recent changes in policies, security of harvests, and socio-cultural values vis-a`-vis intensification. Rather than suggest that this transition will lead to the demise of swidden, results reveal that farmers instead negotiate a shifting ground in which they lean on and value swidden as a means of negotiating agrarian change.