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Chapter 42 Power, distortions, revolt and reform in agricultural land relations

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Publisher Summary

This chapter inquires into the efficiency and equity consequences of rental and sales markets for agricultural land in the developing world. Most of the work on the relationship between farm size and productivity strongly suggests that farms that rely mostly on family labor have higher productivity levels than large farms operated primarily with hired labor. An examination of the historical evolution of land rights shows the reason for the deviations: rights over land and the concentration of ownership observed in most developing countries at the end of World War II are outgrowths of power relationships. The chapter describes the variety of land relations and their consequences for the efficiency of agricultural production. The chapter also examines how these power relations emerged and what legal means enabled relatively few landowners to accumulate and hold on to large landholdings. The methodological epilogue examines how various strands of economic theory have contributed, or failed to contribute, to the



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