

7 Discourse Formation in Social Movements. Issues of Collective Action¹

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In 1973, the Philippine government started a project to build a series of hydro-electric dams in the Chico River of the Cordillera, a region inhabited by the so-called indigenous Igorots. There was immediate opposition in those villages where exploration work for the dams started. Villagers tore down the camps of the exploration teams, and sought the help of local priests to write petitions to President Marcos asking him to relocate the dams in another area. This localized protest turned out to be the beginning of a social movement for regional autonomy.

This chapter aims to trace how the social movement that emerged from resistance to the Chico dams acquired its shape. How did it transcend local opposition, and why did it become a movement towards regional autonomy rather than blend into the national movement against the Marcos dictatorship that simultaneously swept over the country?

The discussion will address key issues pertinent to social movement theory. It will focus, in particular, on processes of discourse formation, or 'framing,' in the Cordillera movement. How did a problem that confronted certain villages in the Cordillera come to be defined as a regional, 'indigenous' issue to which a large number of people committed themselves, even though the problem did not affect them directly? In exploring this question, I contend that collective action discourses are not products in the sense of engineered montages. Literally 'un-authorized,' they are knowledge constructions that emerge from negotiation processes involving different groups of actors. As the first part of the chapter shows, this leads to a more dynamic treatment of the distinction that most social movement theory maintains between different categories of actors, such as 'insiders' and 'outsiders,' or 'movement entrepreneurs' and 'participants.'

In the second place, I want to show how discourse formation is inextricably linked to issues of power and control. Action frames are sometimes understood as functional devices. They define an issue in a way that people can identify with, and contain possibilities for action for which people can mobilize. However, if framing processes are understood as negotiated processes, this opens the door to analyzing how the contestation of frames is linked to power struggles. The stakes in struggles

over definitions are not formed by the definitions themselves, but by their implications for issues of leadership, control and representation. Although they may emerge without a specific author, action frames do lend themselves to contests of authorization. The question then is not merely who can enrol most support for a particular definition, but also who 'owns' the history of the social movement. These issues of control played a role throughout the entire history of the Cordillera movement, but became particularly clear when the movement broke into factions in 1986, when it entered negotiations with the new national government of Corazón Aquino over regional autonomy. This will be the focus of the latter part of the chapter.

My conceptualization of discourse formation as negotiated processes fits within a constructivist perspective of social movements. Before discussing the issue of discourse formation, let me first give an overview of strands of social movement theory that have emerged since the 1960s and elaborate on the constructed character of movements.

Social Movements: Theoretical Perspectives

New theories of social movements (and theories of new social movements), began to flourish by the end of the 1960s. The abundant rise of social movements in Europe and the United States, most prominently among students and blacks, did not seem to fit the restricted place they were allotted in prevailing paradigms. Two strands are usually distinguished in theories of social movements that evolved in the 1970s. One strand, associated with the new social movement theories, sought to understand *why* movements rose in the context of postindustrial societies and emphasized their cultural components. The other, referred to as resource mobilization theories, focused on the question of *how* social movements came about, and how obstacles to collective action were overcome, in particular Olson's 'free-rider' problem. The centre of gravity of the new social movement theories was found in Europe, of the resource mobilization theories in the United States.

New Social Movement Theories

New social movement theories were associated with student and later peace, women's and environmental movements in Europe and the US. The new social movements were different from their forerunners, particularly the labour movement. These differences were largely a matter of the movement's constituency (which was based in new middle classes with remarkable participation by women rather, cultural character, loose organizational structure and aversion to traditional party politics, emphasis on lifestyle and values instead of material demands, anti-modernistic stance,

and their unconventional action forms (Alan Scott 1988, pp. 16–19, Klandermans 1988, p. 7). New social movements have mainly been defined in the context of Europe and the US, but the concept has also been applied in some parts of the southern hemisphere, mainly in Latin America. There, social movements, such as urban, women's, indigenous, and peasant movements, have been considered to share many of the above-mentioned characteristics, with the notable exception that their main constituency is found among poor people, not the middle classes, and that their demands are partly material (see, for example, Escobar 1992).

The label of 'newness' attached to recent social movements provoked endless debates about whether one could truly speak of new movements or whether they shared much *in practice* with older movements. The other side of the argument was that 'old' movements, in their initial stages, shared many of the properties of the new ones, until doomed to bureaucratize according to Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy.' Melucci, a one-time pupil of Touraine and one of the first proponents of the 'novelty camp,' pointed out in his later writings that the debate centred on a false problem. According to Melucci, both sides in the debate suffered from the same flaw, namely perceiving social movements as unitary, empirical objects, a point to which I shall return later (Melucci 1988, p. 336).

The novelty claim, apart from being based on the phenomenological characteristics of the movements, found a theoretical base in the 'new historical stage' that societies in the North were supposed to have entered, namely post-industrialism, regulated primarily by high-tech, knowledge-centred processes. The most renowned theorist that situated the 'new' social movements in relation to post-industrialism was Touraine. This Marxist-bred scholar broke away from structural theories by reversing the connection between social structure and social action, and promoting a sociology of action rather than of society. The social system, he proposed, is created by social action, instead of action being the result of some meta-social principle. The goal that Touraine defined for social movements is the control of *historicity*: the set of cultural models a society uses to produce its norms in the domains of knowledge, production and ethics (Touraine 1984, 1995). This notion made Touraine's social movements both a social conflict and a cultural project: 'its goal is always the realization of cultural values as well as the victory over a social adversary' (Touraine 1995, p. 240).

Despite Touraine's overtly anti-structuralist stance, critics have pointed to a certain continuity in his work of exactly those theories he so strongly opposed. He abandoned the central contradiction of capitalism as the driving force of social action, but seemed to put the central social conflict over historicity in its place. He equated social movements with classes, albeit classes for themselves and not in themselves, and asserted that 'there is only one social movement for each class in each type of society' (Touraine 1983, cited in Scott 1990, p. 68). As one critic stated, Touraine,

and other new social movement theorists of the 1970s, including Habermas, 'searched for a substitute for the working class, and a new focus of opposition to society in its totality' (Scott 1990, p. 80).

Resource Mobilization Theories

The other strand of social movement thinking since the 1970s was formed by resource mobilization theories. These originated with Olson, who coined the concept of 'free-rider problem' to point out that people tend not to commit resources to struggles for collective benefits, since they enjoy the fruits of collective action regardless of their individual participation. Olson's position was extensively criticized for relying on an economic model of rational decision making at the individual level. It lacked explanatory power since although it made non-participation understandable, his theory failed to explain why people *do* so often participate in collective action, sometimes at great personal risk. In Olson's line of thinking people's needs and goals were treated as given, it ignored the social processes through which people's motivation becomes shaped (Scott 1990, pp. 109–131). Moreover, the individualistic basis of Olson's decision-making model was discredited when others, including Melucci and Kreisi, showed the importance of social networks within movements as localities for processes of identification and mobilization (Tarrow 1994, p. 21).

Later resource mobilization theories started to address the question that remained unsolved by early exponents of this strand, namely in what circumstances discontent leads to collective action. Discontent does not automatically result in resistance, nor does resistance automatically result in collective action, as has been demonstrated by Scott (1985). One of the themes of resource mobilization theories, then, became the search for the conditions under which collective action actually emerges. The argument was advanced that collective action does not come about in response to deprivation, but in response to changes in political opportunity structures (Tarrow 1994). Another important element in the development of social movements was found in the role of 'sympathetic third parties' (Klandermans 1988, pp. 4–7).

Resource mobilization theories thus moved a long way from Olson's original thesis and became increasingly finely tuned to the volatile practices and dilemmas involved in collective action. On the other hand, this body of theories was still criticized for over-emphasizing the 'how' of social movements, with a penchant for behaviourism, at the expense of looking at the content and socio-political context of specific social movements (Klandermans 1988; p. 4, Scott 1990, p. 129).

Towards a Constructivist Perspective on Social Movements

The two strands of new social movements and resource mobilization theories, seem to converge in recent literature on social movements. Several contributions to the field explicitly aim to combine the strengths of both (Klandermans 1988; Scott 1990; Escobar 1992). What makes these contributions remarkable, in my view, is not so much the wrapping up of debates by synthesizing approaches, but the way that they mark the advent of a more constructivist perspective on social movements. All of these works evince the constructed character of social movements, to varying degrees. Melucci, however, seems the most consistent in thinking through the implications of this insight.

According to Melucci, many of the earlier debates on social movements treated collective action as a unitary empirical datum, rather than as processes in which actors produce meanings, communicate, negotiate, and make decisions. Once the notion of relatively unitary actors is abandoned, or taken as a product rather than a given, the question of how a 'collective' actor is formed and maintains itself becomes a problem of analysis (Melucci 1988, p. 331). Rather than synthesizing, Melucci distances himself from both new social movement and resource mobilization theories.

'The explanation founded on the common structural condition of the actors takes for granted their capacity to perceive, evaluate and decide what they have in common; it ignores, in other words, the very processes that enable the actors to define (or prevent them from defining) the situation as susceptible of common action. On the other hand, individual differences and motivations never suffice to explain how certain individuals come to recognize themselves in and become part of a more or less integrated 'we'.' (Melucci 1988, p. 332)

According to Melucci, actors produce collective action because 'they are able to define themselves and to define their relationship with the environment (other actors, available resources, opportunities and obstacles).' In the world of Melucci, then, identity formation is accorded central importance: any theory of action that includes actors' expectations, (relating the actors to the external world), implies an underlying theory of identity. 'For only if an actor can perceive his consistency and his continuity will he be able to construct his own script of the social reality and compare expectations and realizations' (ibid, p. 340).

This claim calls into question several issues.² What, then, is (collective) identity? And, this is where I would disagree with Melucci, is a person's perception of 'his consistency and continuity' indeed a *sine qua non* for his/her decision to participate in collective action? By introducing this condition, does he not re-impose continuity and consistency, via a back-door, on collective action and social movements?

Identity or Identification?

Identity is considered an important aspect of social movements: through processes of identity formation, the 'we' is supposed to get constructed that engages in collective action. Identity used to be perceived as an innate quality, a stable property possessed by a person. From this position it has recently been launched on a soaring career. As Tilly has summarized it, concepts of public identities have increasingly become relational, cultural, historical, and contingent:

'The emerging view is relational in the sense that it locates identities in connections among individuals and groups, rather than in the minds of particular persons or whole populations. It is *cultural* in insisting that social identities rest on shared understandings and their representations. It is *historical* in calling attention to the path dependent accretion of memories, understandings and means of action within particular identities. Finally, it is *contingent* in that it regards each assertion of identity as a strategic interaction liable to failure or misfiring rather than as a straightforward expression of an actor's attributes.' (Tilly 1995, p. 5)

'Indigenouness' is a particular kind of identity. It is a form of ethnic identity in which groups define themselves in relation to other groups. Differences are not only perceived as cultural, and expressed in fields varying from the regulation of interpersonal or intercommunity relations to agricultural practices; the indigenous people are also perceived as being overpowered by these others and deprived of their original rights to resources and governance over a particular area. Since indigenouness is linked to a physical area, its emergence is closely related to the formation processes of the wider nation in which it is situated. The nation state seems not only the natural antagonist of indigenous peoples, but also the entity on which indigenous identity is imposingly or oppositionally bred.

In the case of the Cordillera, Finin has demonstrated that in as much as a 'regional identity' (he carefully avoids references to ethnic or indigenous identity) had come about prior to the Chico Dams and related struggles, this was the product of the administrative grids imposed by the Americans during their colonial rule in the first half of this century. Basing his argument on Anderson (1991), he traces the prospects of an 'imagined community' emerging in the Cordillera to the protective policies that the Americans under Dean Worcester extended to the 'tribes' in an area they demarcated as the Cordillera. The Cordillera gained further 'reality' through amongst other things, the introduction of segregated workforces in the mines, and separate education institutes for Cordillera residents. These processes fostered an occasionally expressed experience of difference with outside areas among Cordillera residents and, even more unlikely at the turn of the century, a sense of commonality within (Finin 1991). This perception, embryonic as it may have been at the time, seems partly to

account for the particular shape the social movement in the Cordillera took when the opposition against the Chico dams started.

However, although certain seeds of an 'indigenous identity' facilitated the particular shape the Cordillera movement took, it cannot account for the discourses that emerged, nor for the broad composition of the movement. The discourse of the movement came to centre on the vital value of land in indigenous culture. However, as will become clear, this cannot be taken as a property of indigenous identity. Everyday practices in the Cordillera showed a range of values accorded to land, varying from an inalienable, sacred expression of life itself to a commodity that could be put up for sale (Prill Brett 1993). The question of how, in the course of the struggle, people started to *identify with* land as synonymous to life then emerges as one of the most important to explain, rather than be treated as a given.

Indigenous identity can also not account for the composition of the movement. As will be elaborated, the movement attracted many advocates who were by no means 'indigenous,' varying from national politicians, a range of anti-dictatorship activists, an organization for national liberation, and international advocates. Indeed, like all movements, this was not a unitary entity. Rather than artificially separating the constituents of the movement from 'third parties,' I think these diverse groups should be included as part of the movement. This further calls into question the idea of identity towards an issue as a condition for participation in a social movement. What the 'advocates' shared was not an indigenous identity, but rather a sense of *identification* with the movement. A great number of people started to make the concerns of this movement of 'others' into their own, at considerable risk to themselves.

Following Norman Long (1997), I think, then, it is more appropriate to speak of processes of *identification* with an issue or movement. Identification, according to Long, 'allows one to consider a wide range of self definitions, some more fixed and continuous, others more fleeting and highly situational. How people make and attribute identification to themselves and others offers a key for understanding cultural and socio-political orientations and commitments.'

Discourse Formation in Social Movements

Collective action and social movements partly depend on how people define a situation and how they assess their possibilities for action. The formation of discourses is therefore a key aspect of social movement theories. In new social movement theories that position social movements in post-industrial societies, there is basically only room for one guiding discourse. If, as Touraine claimed, there is only one social movement for each class in each type of society, it follows that there is also only one

'correct' discourse of action. In other words, the discourse gets built into the definition of social movements.

Resource mobilization theories, in their search for conditions for collective action to occur, have done more to problematize the discourses of social movements. In these theories the discourses of collective action have been labelled 'collective action frames.' In a recent contribution to social movement theories, Tarrow deals extensively with the framing processes that lead to action frames. As he explains:

'Out of a toolkit of possible symbols, movement entrepreneurs choose those that they hope will mediate among the cultural underpinnings of the groups they appeal to, the sources of official culture and the militants of their movement – and still reflect their own beliefs and aspirations. To relate text to context, grammar to semantics, we need a concept more suited to the interactive nature of social movements and their societies. A contemporary group of scholars offers such a concept in their idea of collective action frames.' (Tarrow 1994, p. 122)

The concept of framing to which Tarrow refers stems from Snow and companions, who contend that movements function in part as signifying agents that carry, transmit, mobilize and produce meaning for participants, antagonists and observers. Adopting the concept from Goffman, they call this 'signifying work framing' (Snow 1988, p. 198). The emerging collective action frames have a mobilizing appeal and serve to 'dignify and justify' the movement (Tarrow 1994, p. 99)

Notwithstanding the valuable insight that actors' experiences need to be linked to prospects for action in order for (collective) action to occur, Tarrow's position is highly problematic. In the first place, he presents collective action frames as carefully plotted and produced by entrepreneurs. By separating the entrepreneurs from the constituency of movements, he seems to deny agency to non-entrepreneurs, and forecloses them from an active role in the processes of framing. Although this picture may reflect certain moments of certain movements, for example when an established movement launches a campaign to expand its constituency, it does not capture those moments of a movement when framing is 'everybody's' business and concern.

This brings me to the second objection. Not unlike Touraine, Tarrow's presentation implies that each social movement has one discourse, and moreover, that this discourse originates before the movement 'takes off.' In his model, the entrepreneurs and their objectives are given outside of and prior to the collective action. By so doing, he reifies social movements. One of the implications is that he misses the contestations that may occur in the formation of collective action frames as well as in the power struggles that accompany these contestations.

The problems inherent in Tarrow's approach can be met, I believe, by adopting a more constructivist view of what he calls 'framing processes,'

and what I refer to as discourse formation. Consistent with a perception of social movements as constructed processes, instead of unitary phenomena, I propose to view discourse formation as negotiated. Non-linear, multi-polar and not necessarily consistent, they are emergent properties that evolve out of the practice of collective action.

Seen as a negotiated process also allows for inclusion of the role of 'non-entrepreneurs' in discourse formation. In this respect, I think it makes sense to take a look at Scott's concept of hidden transcripts. The concept is derived from public transcripts: open interaction between subordinates and superiors. 'Hidden transcripts are discourses that take place 'off-stage': they consist of those speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript' (Scott 1990, p. 4). Discussed in private, whispered about in public, hinted at through jokes, these are narratives shaped among peers to contextualize their situation. Hidden transcripts play a role in what Scott terms *infrapolitics*: 'the circumspect struggles waged daily by subordinated groups that is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum' (ibid, p. 183). Scott's contention is that there is an analogy between *infrapolitics* and the infrastructure that, for example, enables commerce: 'Infrapolitics provides much of the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused.' (ibid, p. 184)

Although Scott's hidden transcripts sometimes appear to be odd characters, like ready-made products working in the dark, waiting for the right provocation to burst out of their hiding places, his contribution appears to be very relevant to the discussion of framing social movements. The production of hidden transcripts could, to my mind, be understood as processes of discourse formation in people's everyday life. Discourse formation as people's everyday occupation should, I believe, complement the concept of framing as the craft of the entrepreneur.³ Discourse formation, then, should be viewed as a negotiating process in which the distinction between entrepreneurs and constituency are not preordained but get constructed in the process.

The following narrative, on the social movement in the Cordillera, exemplifies this perspective on discourse formation. The first part will focus on processes of discourse formation in the relation between educated, political 'entrepreneurs' and villagers, and the second on the contests between different groups of 'entrepreneurs' who started to compete for leadership of the movement.

The Chico River Struggle

The Chico river is the longest and most elaborate river in the Gran Cordillera mountain range, flowing through Kalinga and Mountain Prov-

inces. The first proposals to construct dams in the Chico river stem from the 1960s, when the Philippine government started to explore means of generating electricity locally in the face of increasing urbanization and industrialization. The initial plans, however, were shelved because they were not considered feasible in either economic or political terms. This situation changed drastically in the early 1970s. World prices for crude oil increased sharply and, with the declaration of Martial Law, President Marcos concentrated such considerable power under his authority that firm implementation of the project could be expected. A German contract firm conducted a Worldbank financed pre-feasibility study in 1973, and came up with a proposal to build four dams in the Chico river, simply named Chico I, II, III and IV. According to the study, the best way to proceed was to start with Chico II in Sadanga, Mountain Province. Following the study, the National Power Corporation (NPC), was charged with continuing survey work. The actual construction of Chico II was scheduled to start in 1978, and to be completed in 1982 (Cariño 1980, p. 3).

The people along the Chico only became aware of the plans when survey teams entered their areas. It did not take long for them to recognize the threat to their communities embodied in the projects, and the survey team's first two camps in Basao were soon torn down by the villagers. In a third effort to erect a surveyors' camp, the NPC personnel was backed up by a military escort. The escorting unit of the Philippine Constabulary began by intimidating the villagers, which involved amongst other things to force local boys to join a William Tell game, and shooting coconuts off their heads (Anti-Slavery Society 1983, p. 103).

The villagers, alarmed by the behaviour of the Constabulary and the material damage done by surveyors to crops and fruit trees, began to seek the intervention of the President. They brought six petitions to the President in the course of 1974, hoping that President Marcos would withdraw the project once he realized its impact on local residents. Each petition, the costs of which were born by the community and church support, was taken by a delegation of village elders to the Presidential Palace, but none of them got the chance of actually meeting Marcos. A letter by the President in response to the first delegation labelled their arguments as 'sentimental' and called upon them to 'sacrifice themselves for the sake of the nation' (ibid).

Until this time, opposition to the dams had been localized. Local, village-based resistance to intrusions, such as in this case the dams, were a typical response in the region's history. The Cordillera had been little integrated in the country's colonial history with Spain, and stands therefore to a certain extent apart from the lowlands. Being apart from the lowlands did not, of course, automatically mean that it formed a region in any political, cultural or social sense. No less than seven mutually unintelligible languages were spoken in the 'region.' Until the turn of this century, the principal level of social and political organization was concen-

trated in villages, although there were larger constellations loosely referred to as 'tribes.' For outside observers, Cordillerans were all tied up in traditional institutions and practices, which earned them the common label of 'Igorots.' Seen from within, however, cultural diversity and inter-village competition were major characteristics of this 'region.' Only in the twentieth century, under American colonial rule, did the contours of a region apart from but integrated into the Philippine nation start to take shape. Notwithstanding a certain degree of regionalization brought about by the Americans, the Cordillera in the early 1970s remained predominantly an area of 'village societies' (see Prill Brett 1989). In Bontok and Kalinga, competition seems to have been the main element in everyday village relations, regularly developing into intervillage warfare. Although some mechanisms had been created to regulate this competition, to which I shall return later, these same mechanisms underlined the division between the *ilis* (villages).

It is therefore not surprising that the villages affected by the dam did not initially coordinate or unite much beyond village level. One of the early petitions to the President, for example, actually expressed support for the dam, as long as it would be built in the area of another village (Berg 1996, p. 50). Later petitions were signed by more villages, and took a completely oppositionist stand against the dams. With the enrolment of church people, the struggle started to appeal to outsiders.

Contours of a Movement

In April 1975, the Catholic Bishop Francisco Claver, of Bontok origin, aligned himself with the Chico basin residents in an open letter to the President. I shall quote at length from this letter, since it draws on several themes that came to be central in the opposition to the dam:

'Mr. President,

I came here because I was summoned by my people. . . . They do not accept your decree – if decree it is. They will not accept it. This is the message they want me to convey to you, with respect, yes, but with firmness, too. Deep down in their guts they know damming the Chico is a *decree of death for them as a people*. This they cannot, will not accept. . . . My people are giving serious thought to armed violence and they are asking whom they should approach for arms. Mr. President, when a Bontok has to turn to a people not his own for help, this only means he has tried his supreme best to solve his problem by himself, and he realizes his powerlessness in the face of overwhelming odds. In short, he is desperate. *Armed violence is the only answer, and he knows his spear and head-axe are no match for your guns* . . . It is my prayer that their message will get through to you and you will grant them the least of their requests: a hearing, a real hearing at some future date. This is all

they ask – for the moment.’ (cited in Anti-Slavery Society 1983, p. 104, emphasis added)

The Bishop’s phrase that the dams meant the death of a people, expresses the vital symbolic meaning of land. Land, as a central element in the ancestral worship of people in the Chico Valley, became a focal point in oppositionist discourse. As one of the later advocate papers explained:

‘All the many ancestor and spirit gods are associated, in the people’s minds, with the land of the home region. The remains of all who die, even those who may die many miles away, are brought home. The home region – the land and all its improvements [a reference to the rice terraces constructed in the area over centuries, D.H.] – as it appears today, is largely the accumulation of the collective efforts of deceased ancestors, of generations of cooperation between the spirits and the living. The living are the guardians of this inheritance and, therefore, have the strong responsibility for the care of the land and the dead. The ancestral spirits will hold the living accountable for any neglect in this awesome responsibility.’ (Cariño 1980, p. 5)

The ‘land is life’ theme was to become the most pronounced in the course of the struggle. This does not mean that it had been from the start, or that it was equally shared by everybody. Around 1977, for example, twenty families from the village of Tanglag accepted the government’s offer to relocate. They came back, however, after some months, because the government had not delivered what it promised (Berg 1996, p. 58).

The other implicit element in Bishop Claver’s letter was the threat of violent resistance. By mentioning the spear and the head-axe he evoked the formally eradicated head-hunting days that continued to linger – if not in practice, certainly in the local memory and in lowland conceptions of Cordillerans. While the image of fierce head-hunting warriors exacting retribution for the desecration of their lands hovers over the letter, their capacity and preparedness to play according to the rules of the game of ‘modern,’ lowland politics is clear in the conventional and non-violent demand for a hearing with the President. The threat of violence remains, while at the same time the Bishop makes it clear that these are not a ‘horde of savages’ ready to attack Malacañang, but ‘reasonable people’ to be taken seriously in the negotiations concerning the dams. This two-faced representation is typical for the repertoire of contention (Tarrow 1994, p. 19, based on Tilly) that was to emerge during the struggle: founded in traditional elements of warfare, but following ‘modern’ tactics to confront the national government.

The Multi-Lateral Peace Pact

The increasingly integrated opposition movement, consisting of multiple villages in the area as well as 'outsiders,' became institutionalized in 1975 through the creation of a multi-lateral peace pact. This instrument was developed during a church sponsored conference in Manila that brought 150 village people from the Chico valley to the capital.

The peace pact, called *Vochong* or *Bodong* among the Kalingas and *Pechen* among the Bontoks is a traditional institution regulating relations between two villages. Although there are many variations, essential elements of such peace pacts are that each village assures the safety of residents of the other village when they come within its boundaries, and that the peace pact holders take responsibility for violence or crimes committed by one of their people against somebody from the other village. One of the implications of village responsibility is that violence can be avenged against any person from the other village (see Benedito 1994; Dozier 1966, pp. 197–239; Barton 1949, pp. 167–208).

The peace pact made at the conference differed in two respects from these traditional ones. First, the signatories of the pact consisted of a great number of parties, not just two villages, and included outsiders who extended their solidarity to the struggle. Second, the content of the pact accommodated the needs of the particular struggle at hand, and aimed to unite villages against the government. The pact stipulated, for example, sanctions against anyone who cooperated with the National Power Corporation. In order to avoid conflicts between villages, two sections of the *Pagta ti Bodong* were included to place struggle related violence outside the jurisdiction of the existing peace pacts among villages:

'2. Should a Kalinga or Bontok from the dam areas be killed while working on the dam project, the peace pact villages opposed to the dam will not be held responsible, nor will they have to answer for the victim.

6. A peace pact already existing between two *barrios* will not be affected in any way when one of the members of a peace pact village dies or is killed as a consequence of his working with the NPC. Relatives will claim his body quietly but are prohibited from taking revenge.' (cited in Anti-Slavery Society 1983, p. 105)

These sections thus made exceptions to the practice of village responsibility for violence committed in their area. The conference peace pact, then, laid down and regulated the intervillage character that had developed in the oppositionist struggle. I will later elaborate on how this peace pact, both in its conceptualization and in its enforcement partly depended on the intervention of the New People's Army.

Government Strategies: Divide and Rule

Several weeks after the conference, Marcos abruptly ordered the NPC to cease all operations and to withdraw from the area. No explanation was offered, but it was believed that his government, in the light of the Muslim war in the South of the country, wanted to avoid a second front of open rebellion in the North (Anti-Slavery Society 1983, p. 106).

The relief at the suspension of the operation was, however, short-lived. By October 1975 it became clear that the government wanted to pursue the activity, and that the project had started work on another site, in Tomiangan, Kalinga, where Chico IV was planned. Tomiangan is a settlement of twenty-six households along the shore of the river. Chico IV would submerge six other barrios, with a total number of 670 to 1,000 families, according to different estimations (Cariño 1980, p. 4). The national government apparently believed that it could divert the opposition, by choosing another site. This turned out to be a miscalculation. Those villages in Mountain province that were no longer directly affected by the project continued their involvement with the opposition in cooperation with the Kalinga villages.

In order to break the opposition, and in particular the intervillage cooperation, the government now brought the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) onto the scene. The head of PANAMIN was Manuel Elizalde, a scion of one of the richest families of the Philippines. Elizalde arrived in Kalinga in November 1975, accompanied by a convoy of four freight trucks, three buses, a helicopter and eight other vehicles. His entourage of sixty people included fully armed soldiers, doctors, lawyers, cinema operators, 'hospitality girls,' and two magicians (Rocamora 1979).

Apart from trying to impress people by handing out money, rice, and other items, PANAMIN's policies to 'pacify' the Kalingas were based on divide and rule tactics. This included the intensification of a local conflict by supplying arms to a village at 'war' with two of the oppositionist villages. Through a combination of tricks, bribery, and promises for development projects, Elizalde was able to enrol a number of community leaders to support the dam project (Winnacker 1979). In his own way, Elizalde thus also built his strategies on cultural heritage and practices in the area, namely intervillage competition and feuds that until recently had dominated relations between villages. While the opposition maximized the regulating mechanism of the peace pact, he tried to exploit the underlying competition between villages.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the rather crude interference of PANAMIN, local resistance against the NPC continued. The villagers in Kalinga responded in similar ways to the people in Bontok: by physically obstructing the surveying work and by petitioning the President. While villagers tried to stop the NPC from constructing buildings, the govern-

ment responded with increasing military intervention. During one of the villagers' raids on the camps, around one hundred villagers, mainly women, were detained and taken to an unknown military camp. The search for detainees took several months, during which villagers' networks in Manila vastly expanded. They enroled the assistance of several NGOs and senators, amongst others.

The struggle got an impetus at the local level when some people from the New People's Army, of the underground Communist Party of the Philippines, arrived and offered to assist villagers in fighting the dams. The villagers readily accepted the offer. As one of them explained during my fieldwork:

'We had a strong opposition. First, we took a clear position to stop the dams. So, we don't allow any materials or constructions into the area. Later, we were outnumbered by the military, so we wrote petitions. But the president of the organization who went to Malacañang was tempted by Elizalde's offer and changed position. A next president was also bribed, so we began to get frustrated. Then the NPA came. We didn't know what to do any more by ourselves, so we thought maybe the armed group could help us further.' (fieldnotes, February, 1996)

Entry of the New People's Army

The New People's Army was established in 1969 as the armed branch of the Communist Party of the Philippines which had been formed one year earlier. After the imposition of Martial Law, when many legal opposition groups were forced underground, the CPP/NPA expanded to become the National Democratic Front with a total of twelve organizations. Following the Chinese example, they envisaged a revolution that was waged from the countryside. From the outset, the Cordillera provinces were considered very suitable for expansion, because of the strategic advantages of a mountainous area. As early as 1971, a first NPA group was established in Ifugao and in 1972 a Montañosa Party Branch was formed. (Castro 1987, p. 27)

Although these first NPAs did not get involved with the Chico struggle, their experiences shed light on later developments in the organization and will thus be considered briefly. The NPA leadership in the Cordillera consisted of cadres originating from the region, but educated in Manila. They were primarily involved as activists in the nationalist movement. During the 1970s, however, they became increasingly influenced by a revival of interest in indigenous culture and values, which was partly triggered by a publication by the historian William Scott, who represented the history of the Cordillera as one of a string of episodes of united resistance against outside forces (Scott 1993, 1972, see also Finin 1991). His rather romantic representation of the cultural heritage of the area⁴ pro-

vided activists with a historic foundation for emerging Cordilleran discourses of a united 'we.'

Interest in Cordillera culture on the part of the NPA cadres was further increased through everyday experiences in the villages they organized. Their (renewed) exposure to Cordillera life led them to initiate debates within the Communist Party on how the local situation should be viewed, and what approach would be appropriate for the CPP/NPA in the area. According to a 1974 assessment, the cadres experienced a 'people's generally cold attitude towards the NPA,' and found that Ifugao could not identify with the NPA and 'did not see themselves as part of the larger Filipino nation' (Castro 1987, p. 27). Moreover, the NPA found specific conditions in the area that made it difficult to apply the general guidelines laid down in the *Philippine Society and Revolution* (Guerrero 1979/1970). According to this handbook, national minorities' right to self determination had to be recognized, but 'the correct policy toward all the national minorities is to take a proletarian standpoint and make the necessary class analysis' (ibid, p. 274). The NPA had tried to follow this approach, but after some time came to believe that it was not suitable for the Cordillera. They made a proposal to the Central Committee to change the Party's style of work in the Cordillera and to form a separate army named the Igorot Liberation Army (ILA). This proposal was turned down by the central leadership of the Party. The controversy led to a temporary suspension of village based work in Ifugao, until 1976 (Castro 1987).

In the meantime, an NPA unit from Isabela Province had to retreat under military pressure to the neighbouring province of Kalinga and took the initiative to start organizing there. They stayed in the area for some time and gained acceptance there, especially after their leader, Ka Sungar, married a Kalinga woman. As opposition to the dams grew, the unit of seven NPA cadre decided to move to Tinglayan and offer their help (Finin 1991, p. 435). The NPA gained much popularity when they started to ambush the Battalions based in the Chico area. Yet, the initial numerical involvement of the NPA remained modest. The NPA cadre in Kalinga had grown to thirty-three by 1979, but then more and more local men, and women, started to join (ibid, p. 453). This often took the form of village delegations, with all villages of the Chico line sending representations to join the NPA.

NPA involvement coincided with an increasing military presence in the area. Faced with growing opposition to the dam the government withdrew PANAMIN, which had hardly been successful in 'pacifying' the Kalingas, and started to send in more military troops. In the years that followed, the NPA took responsibility for armed aspects of the struggle, although strongly supported by the population. The NPA, who sat down with the villagers as equals and whose lifestyle and discipline generally formed a strong positive contrast to the behaviour of government troops, remained very popular. Apart from the many Kalingas who actually joined

the NPA, most villagers were involved in one way or another, as messengers and by providing food for the NPA cadres.

With intensifying military operations in the area and the involvement of the NPA, the anti-dam opposition set into a kind of rhythm. Villagers' everyday routines got framed on the one hand by harsh policies from the military side, including for example curfews that placed strong restrictions on people attending to their agricultural work; and on the other hand, by the need to provide daily food for the cadres. This routine was dotted by regular military operations, ambushes, dialogues and other legal forms of struggle. The estimated death toll related to the struggle was one hundred by 1980, with the majority on the side of government troops, collaborators, and NPC personnel (Cariño 1980, p. 14).

The CPP/NPA's Role in Formation of the Oppositionist Discourse

Although the regional struggle attracted the support of many regional, national and international institutions and support networks, I will focus on the role of the CPP/NPA. Their role was, I believe, crucial among the 'outsiders' for several reasons. The CPP/NPA was directly involved in the struggle at the local level. Apart from the military support that the NPA provided the opposition, they devoted much of their time to educative work. The educative work concentrated on links between the local struggle and the national situation.

The NPA was also strongly involved in the organization of the movement. They assisted with the formation of local organizations and in planning the tactics to be employed in the legal areas. The idea, for example, of making a multilateral peace pact originated from NPA cadres. Another important element was that the NPA could enforce the inter-village cooperation laid down in this peace pact. Military informers were liquidated by the NPA, and the NPA cadres intervened in village conflicts that threatened to disrupt the unity of the opposition.

The other important ally to the villagers were the churches. The churches provided much institutional support and their respectability enabled the enrolment of wide support networks among groups with different political orientations (Berg 1996). However, inasmuch as the churches gave direction to the opposition, this was usually congruent with the national democratic politics of the CPP/NPA. The churches did not of course officially condone the national democratic movement, but many of its members and staff did. One of the largest groups within the National Democratic Front was formed by the Christians for National Liberation. Church people were thus not just influenced by the national democratic movement, but to a large extent formed this movement. Hence, although the influence of the churches was substantial, it largely coincided with the political direction of the CPP/NPA during these years. The same went for

many of the regional and national organizations that supported the opposition, and those that were later formed as part of the regional movement.

Local oppositionist discourse gradually changed under the influence of the national democratic politics that were propounded by the NPA and other organizations. This discourse remained close to the issue of the dams, but became increasingly outspoken with themes that pointed to a 'broader analysis.'

Window on the Emerging Discourse of the Movement

In 1980, a group of Kalinga village leaders had a dialogue with the President of the National Power Corporation (NPC), Itchon. The meeting, transcribed by observers from the Montañosa Social Action Center (MSAC), provides a window on emerging opposition discourse. By this time, early themes had become more elaborated and explicit, while new themes lifted the struggle beyond the immediate environment of the villages. The following excerpts are partly transcribed and partly summarized from the MASC transcription (appendixed to Cariño, 1980.)

The meeting took place in an open space in Binga, Benguet, in the presence of Itchon and six other NPC officials. Immediately after the opening, Itchon invited the Kalingas to speak, and the first to approach the microphone was Macliing Dulag, the most renowned leader of the opposition. He said:

'I have only one thing to state here: your project proposal of building dams along our rivers will mean the destruction of all our properties on which our very life depends. We Kalingas were once known for our well-kept place, but your dam project has brought only trouble among us. We, therefore, ask you: forget your dams, we don't want them.'

A second village elder, Balucnit, added:

'I have travelled through the lowlands and noted that people there could perhaps own pieces of land from two to five hectares. But they can get hungry, as they depend only on the production of rice from these few hectares. This is not so with us in Kalinga. We don't go hungry. We have whole mountain sides for other crops besides our rice . . . The electricity that you produce here . . . where does it go but to factories and the houses of the wealthy?'

The statements of Macliing Dulag and Balucnit reiterated the 'land is life' theme, and the implication of death resulting from the dams. By this time, however, the argument was couched in a comparative way. The Kalinga 'way of life' was compared, favourably, to that of the lowlands. If development meant following the path of the lowlands, they were not interested in it. In questioning the purpose of the dams, for (predominantly foreign-owned) factories and the houses of the wealthy, their denounce-

ment had become partly incorporated into nationalist and class-based arguments.

After another seven statements by Kalingas, Itchon explained, in a mixture of Ilokano and Tagalog, why they had to pursue with the dams, pointing to the energy crisis that threatened the nation. He ended his speech by saying: 'I hope you can understand the answer to your question: we have no choice but to go ahead with it.' The first Kalinga to reply to Itchon brought up another theme that had emerged, namely that of discrimination against indigenous peoples: '... If you decide in favour of dam construction, are we not in this way being considered non-Filipinos? Or are we third class?'

In the discussion that followed, Itchon challenged the Kalingas' representation of the value they attach to their lifestyle and land. He argued that because of a growing population, their way of life was jeopardized anyway: 'This was your problem too, long before the NPC went there.' Furthermore, he referred to the many Kalingas who already left the area to make a living elsewhere and added:

'God gave us brains, not just hands. And so it is not true that when you move out of your places to go elsewhere, you will die there. We use our brains to work out our way to live.'

To this a Kalinga responded: 'God gave us our brains in Kalinga. God gave you yours in Manila. Keep to yours!' In no clearer way could he have indicated that by now an 'ethnic identity' had come about among local participants in the struggle. Lowlanders (in particular Manila people) are here presented as not just different species of God's creation (the notion of God remains as the only shared understanding), but completely incongruous to Kalingas. Anticipating the next section of this chapter, it is perhaps equally interesting to note that the categories being compared are lowlanders versus Kalingas, non-lowlanders versus 'Cordillerans.'

Maccliing added to their defence:

'While it is true, as you said, that people who have moved to other places may have been able to survive, such people voluntarily left their original barrios in search of land. But for any of us to be moved forcibly away from our homegrounds ... this is quite a different matter.'

Maccliing here explains the prominence of the 'land is life' theme in the struggle. He acknowledges that out-migration and/or selling of land, is an accepted and often adhered to part of Kalinga practices. However, he points out the crucial difference between voluntarily leaving with the option of coming back or at least being buried in the 'homegrounds,' and being forced to leave and completely losing the 'homegrounds' to inundation. In discussing peasant resistance in Peru, Smith described a similar process. He showed how in times of conflict, peasants were able

to pose a common front without, however, forgetting their heterogeneity. In the course of the conflict,

'heightened discourse engaged people intensely in the 'production of culture' and in so far as membership and meaning were not just abstract notions vaguely linked to identity but rather were essential to the continuation of livelihood, participants were intensely committed to the outcome of this debate.' (Smith 1989, p. 26)

In the case of Kalinga, the sacred value of land was part of local concepts prior to the struggle, albeit amongst more varied practices and values in relation to land. However, once faced with the threat of completely losing the land, the equation of land to life and something worth dying for became the dominant public transcript of villagers.

Two-Way Influences: Debates Within the Vanguard

Although the influence of the CPP/NPA on the development of opposition discourse and the organization of the movement was substantial, it should not be overestimated in relation to the role of the village elders and the local people. In organizing the movement, the NPA built on existing village networks and practices and, as the discussion above demonstrates, village leaders left an unmistakable imprint on processes of framing. Besides, with the expansion of the NPA, it became an increasingly local force. The vast majority of NPA cadres came from the region, and 'civilian' villagers took a lion's share of the risks and responsibilities to maintain the struggle.

Moreover, the ideological influence worked both ways. The experiences of NPA cadres in Kalinga also led to debates within the Communist Party. As in the preceding years in Ifugao, the CPP/NPA leaders deployed in the region began to review the relation of the struggle in the Cordillera with the national revolution. In 1979, the NPA chapter in Kalinga made a proposal for the establishment of an Anti-Dam Democratic Alliance (ADDA, meaning 'there is') which would comprise a broad coalition of anti-dam activists, with the NPA as its army. The perceptions underlying the proposal were more or less similar to those of the ILA proposal that had come earlier from Ifugao NPAs. The proponents of ADDA thought the issue of the dam was a more important key-link than feudalism and wanted to incorporate indigenous concepts in organizing work. (Castro 1987, p. 29)

History was, however, repeated when the Regional Secretariat of the CPP, turned the proposal down. The Secretariat was concerned that the proposed changes would eventually lead to a replacement of the Party by ADDA. Moreover, it considered the proposal ideologically flawed. According to the Secretariat, the issue of the dam was in fact a manifestation of feudalism, albeit with the government as landlord (*ibid*). This ideological

discussion was far from semantic or academic, and was considered to have far reaching implications. If the dams controversy was a regional issue, the movement would be primarily in the interest of a national minority. Logically, then, there would be no need for leadership beyond the regional level. If, on the other hand, the dams were an expression of feudalism, the class basis would be of primary importance, subsuming the minority question. This would legitimize the integration of the regional opposition into a nationwide and centrally coordinated resistance movement. Although ADDA did not push through, debates within the NPA continued to simmer beneath the surface until eventually, in 1986, one group would break away from the CPP/NPA to form its own regional movement.

Clearly, then, discursive influences during the struggle were two-way processes. The CPP/NPA strongly influenced local opposition discourse, but at the same time got engrossed in debates concerning their own 'project' through the experience in the region. The key to understanding this two-way process is the changing conceptions of NPA leaders. Although deployed in the region as agents of the national Communist Party, many of them were personally attached to the region, either through birth or, in the case of Ka Sungar, through marriage. Their attachment increased through their exposure to the villages and, before long, they changed from 'outsiders' to 'brokers,' whose identification with the national revolution was in competition with their equally strong identification with the region.

Although seeds of conflict were soon to erupt, it seems that the double identification of the CPP/NPA leaders for some time contributed to the coherence that characterized the protest movement until 1986. Visitors and observers during these days were impressed, according to many enthusiastic testimonies in the press, by a movement which was carried both by educated, Manila-bred participants as well as the local population; a close cooperation between above ground and underground structures and, above all, a movement full of vibrancy.

Movement for Regional Autonomy

The protest movement grew significantly all over the Cordillera in the period from 1980 to 1986. Apart from the Chico Dams controversy, another hotbed of resistance had emerged in the Province of Abra, against a government sponsored wood company. From the two centres of resistance, the movement spread to other places, increasingly acquiring a regional character. During these years, the regional movement also expanded vastly through legal organizations, both at local and regional levels. In 1984, the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) was formed. An initial membership of twenty-five organizations doubled within a year. The CPA embodied the village organizations, as well as NGOs and other support groups such

as human rights, media, and anti-dictatorship groups, which had been formed.

The CPA was dedicated to greater Cordillera unity and self-determination. One of the CPA activities was to coordinate the growing international support networks which the regional struggles had attracted. Lobby work by international advocates, amongst others, led the Worldbank to suspend its financial support for the Chico river dams, which all but meant the end of the project. Some time later, under the Aquino administration, the project was officially cancelled. Another effect of international work was that it enlarged the exposure of Cordillera activists to international discourses on indigenous rights, as developed, among other places, at indigenous people's gatherings of the United Nations. The international links served to strengthen the regional movement's emphasis on its 'difference' from the lowlands. The oppositionist agenda in the region became increasingly formulated in terms of indigenous people's rights.

The formation of CPA announced the change that had taken place of a movement against particular government interventions towards a movement for regional autonomy. The movement had changed from 'protest to proposal' (Fals Borda 1992, p. 305). Moreover, through the experience of struggle at local level, exacerbated by international developments, the 'proposal' concerned the region and focused on indigenous rights, rather than the nation state. This transformation meant that the movement's activities became more centred in Baguio City and were more dominated by educated people.

Political opportunities opened up in 1986 to enter negotiations with the national government. When Corazón Aquino replaced Marcos, a new Constitution was formulated and CPA successfully lobbied for a provision on regional autonomy. A tedious negotiation process developed in the years that followed. The stakes in the process were the authorities mandated to the regional level. In the process it became clear that the national government was trying to maintain as much control as possible over the region's natural resources and military and financial matters. As it turned out, the proposal for an autonomous region resulting from the negotiations vested little power at the regional level more resembling an administrative than an autonomous region. Moreover, autonomy was not realized because the proposal was turned down in a plebiscite, which led to an as yet unresolved impasse in the process towards autonomy.

One of the reasons why the autonomous region was not realized, is that the autonomy movement had lost its external coherence. Three factions emerged within the movement during the negotiation process, the resulting groups devoted much of their energy to struggling with each other in the autonomy negotiation arena. Fierce competition arose over matters of representation in the negotiations, and the role that different factions would have in the public organs to be created in the autonomous region. A complicated game evolved in which each group tried to gain the upper

hand in the negotiations. The different parties employed a range of tactics, including lobbying government representatives, withdrawing from panels believed to be dominated by others, criticizing negotiations in which they were not included as undemocratic, and so on. Each faction's tactics reflected on the one hand their assessment of the intentions and policies of the national government, and on the other their own estimated strength *vis-à-vis* the competing groups.

Leaving aside the further dynamics of this process, I want to discuss briefly the factions that emerged in the regional movement during the negotiations. With the emergence of different factions, debates concerning the movement's discourses intensified.

Factions Within the Movement for Autonomy

One group remained the faction aligned to the national democratic movement: the underground CPP/NPA, and the legal CPA. In their analysis, the struggle for autonomy could 'only be successfully waged in conjunction with the overall Filipino struggle for national freedom and democracy' (CPA 1989). The CPA's bid for representation of the Cordillera people was based on its formal membership of people's organizations. In 1987, they claimed to have 124 member organizations, representing an estimated 25,000 individuals (Cariño 1987, p. 169). The CPP/NPA, although never formally involved in the negotiations for autonomy, nonetheless maintained a presence in the process by, amongst others, releasing statements through the press. They claimed their status on the basis of their involvement in the regional struggles:

'The people themselves will tell you that they could not have organized massive and sustained resistance against the Chico River Dam project, the Cellophil Resources Corporation, logging and mining concessions, land grabbing, graft and corruption and militarization if not for the Communist Party's painstaking and unremitting efforts to foster unity among the various tribes and lead the struggle against the common enemy' ('Ka Benjie,' in an interview with Malaya, May 1986, cited in Finin 1991, p. 571)

A second faction emerged when, in 1986, an NPA group headed by a rebel-priest, Conrado Balweg, bolted and formed its own 'Cordillera People's Liberation Army' (CPLA). The CPLA was a result of ongoing debates within the regional CPP/NPA. The major grievance of the CPLA, according to press releases, was the 'Party's failure to understand and accommodate the differences between the Cordillera and lowland society.' The CPLA envisaged an autonomous region, governed through extended traditional peace pact structures. Their claim to represent the Cordillera people was based on their grounding in the regional culture.

'We call [the CPLA] the legitimate army of the Cordillera based on its history. And if we recall, the NPA only entered the Cordillera . . . (when was that?) . . . that was 1970, no? 1972. And the CPLA, although it is not yet called CPLA at that time, it is already there. When I say the CPLA is already established, I say it in the fact that during our, even before the Spanish came to the Philippines our tribal warriors, or I mean clan, are already there. Although it is not yet throughout the whole Cordillera . . . So, the history of the CPLA begins with the developments also of this tribal society . . .' (Mailed Molina, during a Press conference in March, 1986, cited in Finin 1991, p. 778)

The national democratic camp and the CPLA soon became each other's arch enemies, with their competition even extending to ambushes against each other's leaders. Both factions maintained an underground, armed component. An increasing number of advocates for regional autonomy could not, however, identify with the 'infights,' or distanced themselves from armed struggle altogether which they deemed unnecessary after democracy was formally restored under Aquino. These people came to form a third faction when they organized the Cordillera Broad Coalition (CBC). Many of its members were professionals, or local government officials in the Cordillera' (Rood 1987, p. x), and its core was associated with one of the earlier indigenous lobby organizations in the region (Casambre 1991, p. 61; Finin 1991, pp. 260-8).

The CBC, more than other groups, emphasized the diversity of the region, which they represented as 'unity in plurality.' By their own claim, they wanted to represent the voice of the 'silent majority,' and thus placed a strong emphasis on democratic procedures:

'There are varied and equally legitimate voices of the Cordilleras. These voices speak a 'host of tongues' and articulate a greater range of issues and concerns. In any 'peace talks' for the Cordilleras, the silent majority cannot and should not be ignored. This is the challenge to and of the Cordillera Broad Coalition.' (From CBC statement presented in Rood 1987, p. 163)

The three factions that emerged thus all had a different action discourse, with varying assessments of the regional situation and correspondingly diverging proposals for collective action. However, these were not merely competing analyses. Underlying the struggles over the proper way of handling the situation were struggles over representation, leadership and control of the movement. This becomes particularly clear from those elements in the discourses that deal with the history of the struggle. Once the conflicts had erupted, each of the factions reconstructed a past that gave them particular credit for the struggle and the people's 'victory' against the dams. The National Democrats maintained that their contribution to the struggle lent them the status of representing the people, and the

CPLA wanted to derive its status from its cultural embeddedness. The CBC, on the other hand, challenged the singular representation of both other groups, by maintaining that a plurality of voices should be heard and credited, a plurality that they moreover claimed to represent. The struggle for control over the movement was thus not limited to competing discourses about the action at hand, but also focused on a question of 'who owns the history of the struggle?'

Before concluding the chapter, let me return to the question of the relation between movement 'entrepreneurs' and villagers in processes of discourse formation during the years of autonomy negotiations. Although villagers remained involved, the influence of the educated leaders with a base in the city increased. A gap clearly emerged between discourses formed within organizations at the regional level, and villagers. This was particularly clear for the CPA and the CPLA, since these two groups had an outspoken vision of the region, and both maintained a popular base in the villages to whom they were one way or another accountable.

The Missing Link: From Local to Regional Identification

Despite their differences, the CPA and the CPLA had several themes in common. Above all, they both condoned the idea of the Cordillera as an appropriate unit for an autonomous region. Both the CPLA and the CPA formulated a vision to bring the diversity in the Cordillera under one regional denominator. Both encountered objections from their popular base organizations in the provinces of the Cordillera.

The CPLA based its regional vision on the institution of the *bodong*. It wanted to transform the *bodong* into an extralocal and even regional institution. The *bodong* was not, however, practised all over the Cordillera. Moreover, in those areas where peace pacts were part of the local institutions, they operated under different names. *Bodong* only referred to peace pacts in the Kalinga vernacular. The proposed promotion of the *bodong* to a central regional institution provoked a fear among people outside *bodong* areas, that CPLA proposals meant that the Kalingas would 'take over' the region (PIA 1989; Rood 1994, p. 11, see also Prill Brett 1989).

The CPA, on the other hand, introduced the concept of *Kaigorotan*. *Kaigorotan* was represented as a kind of tribe encompassing all 'tribes' in the Cordillera. It was CPA's proposed expression of the Cordillera people as one population with a common identity. However, the CPA had to abandon the concept when they found during their congresses that many highlanders could not identify with the label of Igorot (Loste n.d., Casambre 1991, p. 58).⁵

One could thus say that in both CPLA and CPA efforts to 'translate' the localized discourses that guided struggles against the dams in the Chico River and other government projects in the region, the necessary link through which people in the provinces could identify with the newly

designed discourse got lost. Part of the responses against these discourses by villagers suggest that their 'identification' reached beyond the local level, but did not surpass the areas where their vernacular was spoken. The fact that the Cordillera knows seven different vernaculars, must have been one of the problems in coming to define the Cordillerans as one kind of 'we.'

One indication of this is the eruption of internal conflicts in Kalinga in the 1980s, that is, at the height of the anti-dams struggle. The province of Kalinga partly consists of mountains and partly of wide, low valleys. Since the 1960s, the plane of Tabuk (the capital of the Province) had become an immigration area of people from the neighbouring Mountain Province. Although the area was malaria-infested, its fertile soils attracted a great number of settlers who bought land in the valley. Conflicts erupted between Kalingas and the settlers in the 1980s, when Kalingas started to reclaim the area. A large number of settlers were forced to return to Mountain Province, under such pressure as cattle rustling and violence directed against persons. The Kalingas justified their actions by claiming that the area formed their ancestral land. On that basis, they now dismissed the deeds of purchase of the Mountain Province settlers to whom they had earlier sold the land. In this case, apparently, the oppositionist discourse centred around land, had escaped the confines of its application in the conflict with central government, and been redirected to 'legitimize' conflicts between different groups in the Cordillera.

These conflicts clearly point to a dilemma of the 'indigenous movement' in the Cordillera. The movement acquired its regional character in response to the government's treatment of the region as a resource base for national development. This common ground of opposition against the central government did not, however, replace or exceed the differences within the region. Although a regional 'we' emerged, it remained fluid. Rather than a regional identity, it was an identification with the region that appeared in the common defense against national government impositions.

The conflicts over the discourses of both the CPA and CPLA also show that although, after 1986, discourse formation became mainly an entrepreneurial craft, villagers still influenced the process through their responses. The CPA, for one, retracted the concept of *Kaigorotan*, but was unable to come up with a new concept that would appeal to all vernacular groups within the region.

Conclusion

When the Philippine government started exploration work for dams in the Chico River of the Cordillera in 1973, initial protest was localized. It was almost unimaginable, at the time, that the opposition to the dams would

lead to a region-wide autonomy movement whose radiation affected the entire country and whose mobilization networks reached United Nations' headquarters as well as numerous countries in the North. Yet, this was exactly what happened.

This chapter has aimed to explain how this movement got its particular shape, which led to the discussion of discourse formation in collective action. In current social movement theory, collective action discourses are sometimes understood as prefabricated by movement entrepreneurs. The case of the Chico dams struggle revealed, however, how discourses emerge in the practice of collective action. The discourses are actor constructed. They arise from the practice of everyday resistance in complex processes of negotiation involving different groups of actors.

Central to the collective action discourse that emerged in the Cordillera was the theme of 'land is life.' This theme was not a new invention. Prior to the struggle, the meaning of land as the inalienable heritage of ancestors and the residence of ancestors' spirits, was one of several cultural repertoires related to land. However, in response to the immediate threat posed by the dams, which were to inundate land to be lost forever, this particular repertoire became dominant and land attained, for that moment, an absolute value worth dying for.

In the course of the struggle, the 'land is life' theme became elaborated and the collective action discourse started to contain class-based and nationalist themes. These changes can be traced partly to the influence of the Communist Party of the Philippines, whose military wing, the New People's Army became a vanguard in the organization of the struggle. The CPP/NPA had entered the arena of struggle against the dams as a way to incorporate regional resistance into a nation wide revolutionary movement. However, through the experiences of the NPA cadres in the struggle and their exposure to Cordillera people and practices, some NPAs became increasingly convinced that the Cordillera could not be subsumed under a national revolution but should have a status apart, both because of different conditions that prevailed in the area and in order to allow space to traditional practices in the struggle. As a result, the newly emerging collective action discourse not only incorporated nationalist elements, but also regional themes that explicitly distinguished the Cordillera from lowland Philippines and addressed issues of discrimination against indigenous peoples. These regional elements were further reinforced when Cordillera representatives started regularly attending United Nations' gatherings on indigenous peoples.

The particular ways in which the collective action discourse evolved, thus reflected the interaction between the nationalist NPA and local villagers (as well as other actors not further elaborated on). The NPA imprinted nationalist themes on the local discourses through their educational and organizing work, while they raised debates within the CPP/NPA to accommodate the regional particularities in the national

revolutionary movement under the influence of the local villagers. The emerging property of years of struggle and debates was a movement for regional autonomy.

Rather than being fabricated by movement entrepreneurs, then, discourses of collective action are produced through continuous iteration between entrepreneurs and participants, engineering and spontaneity, myth and 'reality.' In the Cordillera case, these tension-ridden tendencies met at some junction halfway through the 1980s, producing a moment when the movement attained its most irresistible or, depending on the observer, its most terrifying vibrancy.

However, when in 1986 political opportunities for negotiating regional autonomy opened up, the conflicts underlying the particular direction the struggle had taken burst into the open and the movement split into different factions. Each of the factions favoured a different definition of the situation at that moment. Moreover, each of them recreated the history of the movement in such a way as to claim 'ownership' over this history and attain a status to represent the Cordillera people *vis-à-vis* the national government. Another problem that came to the surface during this period was the increasing gap between discourses that defined the Cordillera as a unit of indigenous people, and local villagers' lack of identification with this region. Villagers' identification remained with smaller areas that did not exceed the socio-linguistic groups to which they belonged. As a combined result of repressive policies by the national government, and these conflicts and tensions within the movement, the autonomous region envisaged did not materialize.

The infights that evolved between the factions point to the importance of discourse in informing power struggles. Collective action discourses are not free floating constructions, but emerge out of, and are limited by, concrete experiences in a historically specific struggle. Moreover, conflicts over discourse are not merely debates regarding the appropriate interpretation of a situation. As Arce *et al.* have stated, 'it is in the domain of discourse that interaction between knowledge and power accords validity to images of reality' (1995, p. 156). The material presented in this chapter underscores the point that issues of power and control are at the heart of conflicts over discourse. Collective action discourses emerge out of concrete experiences, and contestation of discourses is a form of power struggle that can significantly reshape the relations between groups of actors.

Notes

- 1 I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Norman Long and Pieter Hilhorst for their valuable comments and suggestions in the preparation of this chapter.
- 2 Another question is whether identification is accessible to the observer, in other words, how to measure or observe consciousness? In dealing with this dilemma, Anthony Marx

proposes to rely on elite pronouncements and evidence of collective actions as indicators of identity formation, 'cognizant of the limits of this approach' (Marx 1995, p. 165). So will I. It would be useful, however, to bear in mind the nature of the 'elite' brought forward in the ensuing narrative of the Cordillera movement, especially when village leaders are concerned. Although maybe more affluent and influential than their co-villagers, these people were fully engaged in everyday village life, usually non- or semi-literate, whose pronouncements have been transcribed by movement advocates or recorded during my fieldwork.

- 3 On the other hand, it seems social movements may also feed people's hidden transcripts. During my fieldwork in the Cordillera, for example, passing references were sometimes made to ideas I recognized as products of the anti-dams struggle, even among people never actively engaged in it.
- 4 Florendo, for example, in discussing Cordillera involvement in the Philippine revolution of the end of the nineteenth century, concludes that: 'An ideology that transcended tribal boundaries was definitely not in accord with the conditions in the Cordillera at the outbreak of the Revolution. The *tribus independientes* were reacting to the crisis because of the need to ward off threat to their tribal integrity' (Florendo 1994, p. 88).
- 5 Interestingly enough, debates about regional autonomy were mainly concerned with the way highlanders related to each other. The question of how lowlanders living in the Cordillera, estimated to comprise almost half of the Cordillera population, would be integrated in the autonomous region played only a minor role, unlike the Mindanao autonomy movement where the relation between Muslims and Christians was a central area of contestation (Rood 1988, 1994, p. 16; Finin 1991, p. 672).