

Conjuncture, Confluence, Configuration: Recounting the Turning Points in the Narrative of Former Revolutionaries

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Abstract

This paper attempts to examine the question: what conditions inspire former members of the CPP-NPA in Mindanao to believe that the CPP-NPA-led revolution is the answer to the crisis in the Philippines. This paper is based on a recent study of the life history of former revolutionaries who are now settled or are working in the City of Tagum. That study describes the former revolutionaries' personal circumstances and their experiences in the family and community which stimulated the confluence of conditions inspiring the decision to join the revolutionary movement.

This same confluence of conditions has some bearing on the nature of their subsequent experiences within the CPP-NPA, assuming forms impinged upon by certain events taking place in the nation's economy. In turn, these are explored for their significance in inducing conditions that had prompted their discontinuance from the movement. As well, the configuration of these factors are reviewed especially for the nature of adjustments they had to make in mainstream society after discontinuance from the movement. This configuration of conditions allows the former revolutionaries to observe how, even in the present, the incompatible, increasing, and broadening human aspirations of the

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peoples in the Philippines are unsatisfied by existing institutions. The past institutional failure to provide the means to address widening aspirations which cause revolutions to occur had degenerated in the present, intensifying the fervor of the movement.

Essentially, the life history of the former revolutionaries is a function of the conjuncture of these conditions. Such conjuncture influences their perspectives about Philippine society and the revolutionary movement.

Keywords: revolutionary movement, life history, socio-political environment, configuration

Rationale

Extreme and increasing poverty afflicts the nation. The several crises in the Philippines compel various sectors in the country to struggle for a better life: peasants, for genuine land reform; workers, for better living wages and more humane conditions; indigenous communities, for assertion of their right to ancestral domain; the youth, for access to quality education; and the whole populace, for a better life deserved by human beings (CAST-Mindanao, 2008).

Across the country, 2.54 million families are subsisting on 50.00 pesos daily. Of the three geographical regions in the country, Mindanao has the highest poverty incidence, despite its rich natural resources and food-producing capacities with 50.56 percent living below the poverty line. Visayas has 38.7 percent, and Luzon, 36.5 percent. "Such reality underscores the persistence of injustice and the denial and the deprivation of people's basic rights" (KPD: 2). A system of unjust social, political, and economic structures has been generated by a colonial past and a history of elite-dominated governments. This system has, for long, benefitted a powerful few while the majority of Filipinos remain impoverished and marginalized. Among the characteristics of the resultant sociopolitical environment are poor governance, a continuing lack of access to basic services, lack/absence of access to and control of the majority over productive resources, especially over land, and a loss of respect for the culture of indigenous peoples and lack of recognition of their right to ancestral domain. Such an environment provides the breeding ground for armed conflict.

The armed conflict in the Philippines is deeply rooted in issues of social inequity and injustice (Evangelista, 2001). This armed conflict is led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), founded in 1968, supported by its military arm, the New People's Army (initiated in 1969), and its political front, the National Democratic Front (NDF).

The NPA in Mindanao, Taberdo (1992) declares, concentrated its guerilla zone building at the eastern part of Mindanao, in the province of Davao del Norte, especially during the later part of 1973 till around the year 1976. Over the years hence, in the City of Tagum, observers declare that many cadres had been seen coming from their mountain hideouts down to the city proper to procure their provisions of food, supplies, materials, and other needs. Much later, the observers reveal, the city would be the site of job-hunting efforts of cadres of the CPP-NPA who had either been captured during military raids or encounters, or had surrendered to government, or had just simply left the CPP-NPA for various reasons.

Review of Literature

The study of Taberdo (1992) underscores how the Marcos declaration of martial in 1972 had made the situation excellent for armed struggle. Insights from the works of Abinales (1993), Bello (1992), Evangelista (2001), Garcia (2001), Rocamora (1993,1992), and Westoby (1989) place the political history of the revolutionary movement in the context of the Philippine nation's socioeconomic ups and downs. A look at the revolutionary movement and the resultant revolutionary government in Nicaragua (Walker, 1986) provides insights as to how postrevolution government programs had been successfully launched by the Sandinista revolutionaries. The books of Pimentel (2006, 1989) disclose how an activist leader of the moderate bloc turned leader of the radical movement. These literature hopefully contribute to the context in which this paper is made.

Objectives

This paper examines the conditions that make men and women who had been members of the social movement, the CPP-NPA in Mindanao, believe that the revolution is the answer to the Philippine crises. It aims at:

1. reviewing the conditions that had inspired the decision of former revolutionaries to join the CPP-NPA in Mindanao
2. recapitulating the nature of the experiences as members of the movement
3. relating the conditions that had prompted their inactivation in the movement
4. describing the support systems upon inactivation and their experiences in mainstream society
5. explaining their perspectives now about society and the revolutionary movement

Methodology

Qualitative in design, it employed the life history method. To constitute the bases of our framework of analysis, concepts were drawn from theories of conflict, relative deprivation, and social movements.

Relying on such concepts, this study presupposes that personal circumstances of the subject are factors that precondition the key informant's experiences in the family and community prior to membership in the movement. These personal circumstances and their experiences in the family and community are presumed to stimulate the confluence of conditions prompting the decision to join the movement. This same confluence of conditions has some bearing on the nature of their subsequent experiences within the CPP-NPA. (These are viewed in the context of the social and economic development in the nation's history.) In turn, these experiences within the movement are explored for their role in inducing situations that provoke the subject's discontinuance from, or inactivation in, the movement. They are likewise explored for the nature of survival strategies and job hunting immediately after discontinuance from the movement and for the character of their interactions with the people in the community in mainstream society.

These are reflected in the adjustments that they had to make because of the differences in lifestyle. All these constitute the configuration of factors that had made them sustain their principles and cling to their present beliefs. (Please refer Figure No. 1 for the schematic diagram of this study's conceptual framework.)

This study made use of primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources were in-depth key informant interviews of the former revolutionaries. The secondary sources of data consisted of books, published journals, an unpublished undergraduate thesis, and online journals. Eight (8) key informants comprise our research subjects chosen purposively through snowball sampling or chain sampling technique. Three (3) are females and five (5) are males. Chosen for having been members, for no less than five years, of the CPP-NPA in Mindanao, they have either present residence, or present work, or both, at Tagum City, the site of this study. Tagum is a first class city in the First Congressional District of the Province of Davao del Norte.

The key informant interviews were recorded on tape; the recordings were transcribed and encoded following the logic of the items listed in the question guide. Data were classified in clusters of information pertinent to each objective of the study. Relevant information were selected from the clusters of responses subjected to content analysis. Themes drawn from the selected information were analyzed for any pattern of either similarity or difference in experiences in any one particular situation across the eight (8) key informants.

Aside from the data analysis required to achieve the pre-set objectives, although undeclared as an aim of the study, an attempt was made to distinguish between the responses of female and male key informants, exercising, as such, some degree of sensitivity to gender differentiations.

Significance of the Study

This study initiates the discussion of the experiences of former members of the CPP-NPA in Mindanao, tracing the personal circumstances of the revolutionaries and the background of their involvement in the movement, their experiences within the CPP-NPA and the competence acquired therein, until their discontinuance from it, as

well as, their present circumstances. Hopefully, it shall provide some insights on which to base an examination of the theories of relative deprivation, or of social movements, or of conflict. Because it is the first time at the Department of Sociology, College of Arts and Social Sciences, that the method of life history is being employed, this study hopes to stimulate, through the generation of empirical bases, the process of assessing the method and making improvements on it in future studies. Too, it is hoped that the study results provide impetus for formulating policy pertinent to government programs that address problems constituting causes of armed struggle, or policy relevant to programs that cater to revolutionaries who return to the fold of government, or policy germane to genuine and integrated socio-economic development programs for Philippine society.

The Study Subjects

The former revolutionaries studied are Ella, Rose, Helen, Gilbert, Ricardo, Waway, Denver, and Jollie (pseudonyms). Their narratives are moving and, at once, reveal poignant memories of the turning points in their lives – from the vividness of a childhood that had been marked by poverty and suffering, to the exuberance of youthful but somber years accentuated by gradual awakening to the causes of such poverty and suffering, to the fervor, passion, and commitment of adulthood heightened by the urgent need to address the causes of such poverty and suffering. Theirs are heart-rending stories of sacrifice and life-threatening situations that are, most often, terrifying, but at times, hilarious, as they assumed tasks in the movement even as they led lives whose nature was largely collective. Theirs are narratives of unique adjustments made upon separation from the movement, compelled to give up some essential features of the collective life which they had led therein. This capitulation had attended their struggle for survival to enable them to function in mainstream society which environment is marked by a strong sense of individualism. Among those who had been able to find jobs, they enthuse about the extensive applicability to present jobs of the competence that they had realized while engaged in the movement. Even as they strive to blend in the individualism of mainstream society, their ideology and principles have remained unchanged.

Discussion of Results

Sociodemographic characteristics

The average age of the females (49.3) is higher than the male (45.8). All key informants are married except for one who is a widow. They are Roman Catholics except for one who is a Born Again Christian and another who is a non-believer. The range of number of children is higher among the males. The average number of children for all key informants is two (2). The females have higher educational attainment than the male key informants. All of the key informants have respective means of livelihood with the average income of females (11,333.33 pesos) higher than that of the males (7,300.00 pesos). Please refer to Table No. 1 for the details.

The male key informants had joined the movement at a younger age and in years earlier than the female key informants. All were students (either high school or college) and were single when they first joined the CPP-NPA in Mindanao. One surmises from the data on age at which the key informants first joined the movement that they had been idealistic youth, eager to explore possibilities particularly in regard to addressing the realities that the movement had articulated in various ways. These ways had apparently been convincing to the key informants, enough to join the movement at such an early age. Rutten (2002) discusses the idealisms professed by activists who are intent on joining the movement whose leaders presented to them their description and analysis of social situations that necessitated a certain a degree of commitment from them.

Only frugal living had been affordable to the respective key informants' families of origin with their low incomes. And when faced with difficulties due to the distance of the breadwinner's place of work from their residence, or, emergencies (like the surgery undertaken on a family member, burning down of the place of work, loss of job or unemployment of a parent, land use conversion), the families had been prompted to resort to survival techniques. These survival techniques included cessation of schooling of some children, working by all members of the family in the banana plantation, assumption of family support by one of the siblings, moving upward to the mountain farms to ensure togetherness of all family members while earning a living.

Conditions prompting the decision to join the CPP-NPA

Some conditions identified as stimulating the decision to join the CPP-NPA are unique to each of the key informants. Those identified by the females appeal more to the intellect. These refer to their understanding of the situation of the Philippines and the aims of the movement, and inspiration derived from clarity of the line, scientific nature of strategies and tactics to ensure success of the movement.

Majority of the males' responses appeal more to the emotion. For example, one joined the CPP-NPA because he was frustrated that he could not study formally to become a soldier. Another joined the movement to avenge his father's death. Still another identifies the primary reason of his ego being touched at the thought of women joining the movement.

Both male and female key informants mention that, on separate occasions, part of the conditions prompting their decision to join the CPP-NPA were the impact of the presence of the military and the extent of militarization in their communities. Some mention how they or their family and relatives were harassed and abused by the military. As well, their realization of the crisis in the Philippines, and their perception of the system of governance as defective, also served to motivate them to join the CPP-NPA. One decided to join the movement because he and his family were victims of land grabbing.

Orientation to the CPP-NPA

Prior to membership in the movement, the key informants were oriented regarding the CPP-NPA through various forms. Some of these involved attendance in educational discussions or participation in formal institutions. They interacted with and tagged along FTs (fulltimers), and eventually were invited to join the CPP and were designated tasks therein. These orientations were conducted primarily in their communities. Some were undertaken in their church and/or in their schools. All the key informants cite that they had not been "recruited;" rather, they had been "invited" to join the movement, or they had joined the movement voluntarily.

The declarations of the females pertain to the organizational and ideological aspects of the process – a more formal process. The responses of the male key informants indicate that they had gone through a less formal approach. They experienced having engaged in discussions with FTs (fulltimers) when the latter would visit the key informants' homes, eventually tagging along the FTs, participating in their meetings and discussions with the masses, until the key informants themselves would declare that they wished to join the FTs and be with them in all their works.

Perception of the aims of the movement

All key informants describe their perceptions that underscore the aim of social movements, namely, of changing the miserable conditions underlying dissatisfaction. The aims of the movement, as they perceive them are, in general, liberation of the people from imperialist control, alleviation of the lives of the Filipinos, elimination of exploitation and oppression of the farmers and workers, and installation of a government that envisions the welfare of the masses.

Involvement in the guerilla unit

Asked about their tasks in the armed component, the females declare non-involvement therein. They would constitute part of the medical team that accompanied the armed unit. Or, they would be assigned in the white area (cities) to organize the urban poor or workers, or engage in alliance-building. Similarly, some male key informants also undertook medical and organizing tasks, although primarily, they were the combatants. A female key informant became a combatant only as soon as she had married one assigned in the armed unit.

Community services rendered

As members of the CPP-NPA, the key informants undertook certain tasks that brought them in constant touch with the communities. These consisted largely of health care services and activities for raising awareness of, and for education about, the realities of the Philippine situation, particularly oppression of the majority. In addition, they

conducted sessions during which they would be urged to know about, respect, and protect each other's rights, as well as, uphold women and children's rights. In others, the service consisted of minimizing crimes of theft and robbery by controlling the bullies in the community.

More services were extended in certain areas, like putting in place such community livelihood projects as communal poultry and piggery. They conducted trainings for medical services. But most especially, they had succeeded in confiscating land for redistribution to the landless following a revolutionary agrarian reform. All these were done in pursuit of the aims of the movement discussed above. These underscore how the movement had succeeded in integrating itself in the village community.

Tasking, lifestyle, experiences in the movement

The females declare that they engaged in the conduct of educational discussions (E.D.s), orientation, assessment, planning, seminars, and group discussions. They also were tasked to make proposals, reports, and memoranda. They handled for the armed unit the teaching of lessons on financial systems, as well as, on presentation of financial reports. They also engaged in organizing an area. An important task was resource generation for the movement.

The male key informants identify a variety of tasks that they had embarked on. These included political, military, social, and medical tasks. They facilitated the conduct of medical trainings, educational discussions (EDs), assessments, comrade evaluation. They also performed organizing and consolidation of pre-identified areas, and propaganda work. Helping in farm work and in the household chores of the masses paved the way even better for integration to the community. Generating arms for the movement, they spent time in operations against the military. They had been prepared to take care of wounded comrades in various ways.

The lifestyle of a guerilla member is characterized by our female key informants as highly mobile. With no permanent residence, their backpacks had become their houses. This rendered speedy evacuation, whenever necessary. Likewise, they carried important equipment with them all the time. Journeys were long and perilous, but they were ready to die or to get injured anytime. Food was rationed, and hunger, inescapable. They relied on the support of the masses in their

undertakings in the communities, interacting with the masses, helping in their household chores. Clearly, in this kind of lifestyle, the family had to occupy second priority for these female former revolutionaries.

Like their female counterparts, the male former revolutionaries declare that they were continually on the move, their lives in perpetual danger, the military relentlessly hunting them. With no permanent residence, they were repeatedly exposed to the elements, with neither a schedule for meals, nor provision for actual meals, thus, hunger was inescapable.

Among the unforgettable experiences of the females inside the movement were those that pertained to the recurrent danger facing them, especially in times of intensified operations of the military and actual encounters with the forces of the military, worse, captivity by them. There had been life-threatening situations. For example: evading bombardment, crossing over or passing through mountains, or on-the-job training in the extraction of the bullet lodged in a comrade's shoulder. They declare that all these reinforced their view of the reality of the Philippine situation. Other experiences included the internal political debates, the purging, the suspicion of being a deep penetration agent (DPA). Also, they find their experience of interacting with the indigenous peoples, who showed care, to be significant and unforgettable. The humane side of the revolution is underscored in this, and in many more distinct events.

Comrades in the movement also established special relations with particular marriage partners. These were possible, following a program characterized by a long process of collective decision-making.

In the case of the males, a number of them found unforgettable the experience of getting to know the doctrines and teachings of the CPP-NPA, and getting to internalize the principles of the movement. These male revolutionaries had been charged with the primary responsibility of conducting operations against the military in waging war against the government. These operations were marked by actual encounters with the military. These operations were also distinguished by sudden burst of gunfire interrupting their sleep or their meals, or by impermanence of area for sleeping, or by evasions during actual raids of the government troops. Moreover, it involved getting oneself shot, near-death situations where the victim himself had been compelled to guide the first-aider in

extracting the bullet and in treating the wound after extracting the bullet. Other experiences, while perilous, provided some sense of comic relief.

In sum, the experiences in the CPP-NPA were as colorful as they were dangerous. All members must have attended or conducted educational discussions, done propaganda work, and generated funds and resources. All items issued to them were rationed. Often, they would skip meals or delay taking them. Their backpacks were their homes. They all had experienced encounters with and/or captivity by the military. They all feared for their own lives, their comrades, especially those with whom they had relations. Families of origin were second in priority.

The males were usually the ones who would be armed. The females would carry arms only for defense, not for engaging in offensives. The females were grounded more in political ideology and concepts, and they held key political decision-making positions. The views of males were decisive when the concerns referred to military matters. In all, the unforgettable experiences described by the former revolutionaries emphasize the perpetual danger that they had subjected themselves to in relentless pursuit of the aims of the CPP-NPA. They serve to reinforce the lessons learned from the discussions about the aims of a social movement so eloquently described by the authorities cited by Tischler (2007).

Intra-movement difficulties, inter-comrade relational problems

Asked about the difficulties encountered while serving in the movement, the females declare a number of intra-movement situations that were problematic or critical, or that led to problems and issues, including, ill-preparedness in the face of military raids and the sacrifices assumed in evading the military. On top of these was the inadequacy of funds for food. Certain incidents described by females also illustrate the loosening of discipline among the comrades and the poor enforcement of revolutionary laws. On the personal side, some females relate the difficulty in adjustment to comrades, and squabbles attributed to disagreement over financial policies.

The males have common remarks with the females as far as their subjection to hardships and difficulties in adjusting to other comrades is concerned. They reiterate the matter of having to fast, or to skip meals, given the highly mobile nature of their activities, as well as, to lose sleep.

We asked the former revolutionaries about how they would view their experiences of encounters with the military and how they had felt upon actually encountering the military. Their declarations are quite revealing about the perpetual danger haunting them, their ever-present fear of loss of limb or life, and fear of loss of loved one during military encounters.

We also asked them about how they felt upon witnessing the death of a comrade. Their statements illustrate their rage about, grief for, and resignation to, the occurrence of casualties among their ranks, mixed feelings accompanying the tragedy of death. While feeling enraged, saddened, and aggrieved for fallen comrades, the mixed feelings had, over the years of battling, gradually turned to resignation to the inevitability of death as part of the reality of the life of a revolutionary.

Learnings and realizations

All are one in saying that personally, the tasks had been difficult, tiring, but also satisfying. In fact they provided a sense of fulfillment and happiness.

The former revolutionaries describe how they have learned a lot from their experiences in the movement. The testimonies indicate that among the females, the experience has, in general, enabled them to acquire certain skills in facilitating discussions, as well as, certain attitudes of collective decision-making and participatory planning and assessment, and open-mindedness. Also, on the personal side, they had learned how to adjust to each other's different personalities.

As for the male key informants, they, too, declare that they have had several learnings pertinent to collective decision-making, participatory planning and assessment and evaluation, and ideological advancement. As well, they declare that they had had skills training (leadership, medical, organizing, farm work, and simple skills in accomplishing household chores) and attitudinal transformation on self-discipline.

From these declarations, it is evident that the range of learnings is wide, from the ideological (basic problems of the country and principles guiding the search for options addressing the problems), to the pragmatic (skills training in organizing, communication and facilitating, medical services, leadership, participatory planning and evaluation, collective

decision-making, farmwork, and completion of household chores), to the personal (adjusting to each other's different personalities). All these underscore the nature of collective life and collective decision-making.

Separating from the CPP-NPA

Having described the various events that transpired in their lives within the movement, the former revolutionaries relate to us several conditions that had provoked their discontinuance from the CPP-NPA. Primordial among the concerns identified by the females is the desire to personally take care of their family of procreation. Their children had been left to the care of their grandparents or other relatives. Actual captivity is another condition that spelled the difference between continued involvement or inactivation, particularly when the captive lost contact with the collective. Another condition identified by a female key informant is fear of the eminent danger of capture of her husband, as she had been released from captivity but kept under close surveillance as the military's tracer for the husband in hiding.

On the part of the males, they say some factors had provoked their surrender. Captivity of wife (also a member of the CPP-NPA) and children, and constancy of harassment and threats by government on the life of family members, compelled the surrender of the CPP-NPA cadres. Physical disability resulting from wounds inflicted during an actual encounter compelled a cadre to leave the movement and lie low. There was one who felt betrayed by the revolutionary leadership which, according to the former revolutionary, did not care to look for him upon captivity by the military. This feeling of betrayal worsened the revulsion felt for the defects in the leadership of the movement or its internal procedures, and abhorrence of cases of theft and purging which the key informant had regarded as immoral. These emotion-ridden conditions served to spark off inactivation in the CPP-NPA. One male subject also expressed the urgent desire to be with his family of procreation.

The form of discontinuance had taken either of two modes: surrender, or "lie low." Surrender by the former revolutionaries entails formal submission to the authorities. "Lie low" refers to the action of simply quietly dissociating oneself from the movement, neither surrendering formally to, nor turning informer for, the military. Among the eight (8) former revolutionaries, five (5) had wanted to be with their

families of procreation, four (4) of who had sought prior permission to leave their respective collectives. Three (3) had been captured and lost contact with respective collectives upon capture. As an aftermath of captivity, two lay low and one formally surrendered. One subject whose family members had been captured ahead as bait, surrendered to ensure the safety of the former. Four (4) had lost contact with respective collectives (one, surrenderee, and three, lie low cadres). Please refer to Table No. 2 for a summary of this configuration.

Personal circumstances upon inactivation in the CPP-NPA

We recall here that majority (five) had joined the CPP-NPA in the early '80s. Three (3) had joined in the late '70s. This was the height of the martial law regime which, we are informed, had brought untold suffering to the toiling masses of the people, as cited aptly by Rocamora (1993, 1992). Five (5) separated from the CPP-NPA in the late 80s (or during the presidency of Mrs. Corazon Aquino). Two (2) did so in the early '90s (Ramos administration), one in the early '80s (Marcos' time). By the time they had separated, the former revolutionaries had been in the movement for an average of 7.875 years. The shortest time served was 5 years, by a male, the longest time, by another male, 13 years. Ironically, this longest serving revolutionary is the person who had been advised to leave due to physical disability. The average length of service of the females is 8.66 years, the males, slightly longer, at 9 years.

At the time of inactivation, each of the eight (8) was serving the movement as an officer or member of a committee. Three were serving as secretaries: one district secretary (a male); two front secretaries (one female, one male). One (female) was serving as chair of the Finance Committee. Two (a female and a male), as members of the medical team/paramedics. While one male was serving as Commander of an armed unit, another male was serving as a combatant.

At present, three (3) are in government service (one female and two males); the rest are in business (female), agriculture (male), alterative medical practice (male), development work (female), and political alliance work (male). This shows how the former members have been able to assume work in various endeavours, public or private. The average monthly income of the females presently is PhP 11,333.00, higher by 4,033.00 than the males, at 7,300.00. The highest earner is a female,

at 20,000.00, the lowest at 2,500, is a male. Please refer to Table No. 1 for the details.

Reviewing that table gives a capsule version of the life of the former revolutionaries. It hints at the important turning points in each life of the individuals brought into the movement by a commonness of perception about the structural conditions of the nation spawning poverty and related problems of poverty.

Government support

In regard to government support, only a small number declare knowledge about the matter, in varying degrees. It appears that only a few took seriously the programs for rebel returnees. Particularly for those among the females who did not surrender to government, they saw no sense in availing themselves of the program for reconciliation. Even one who had surrendered to government did not wish to avail herself of the program. One of those who did attempt to avail of the provisions thereof believes the program had not done much for him. One who did avail himself of the program thinks the assistance was substantial.

Family relationships and support

Asked about the family's reaction to their discontinuance from the CPP-NPA, all declare that their respective families are glad about their decision. Their relationships in the family of the females are characterized by intimacy. In the case of the males, it is "all right." Although family relations are regarded as satisfactory, one subject sees the need to get to know a sibling more after having left him for five years. In another family, there had been disbelief and surprise at seeing the former revolutionary sibling alive. All are one in saying that they enjoyed the moral and emotional support of the family. Very few say anything about receiving financial support.

Providing for the family of procreation and adjustments made for relevance in the present environment

We asked our key informants to describe their perception of the people's reactions to them. They describe a range of reactions: from happiness, to respect, to acceptance. This is evident in the declarations of the females. One declares that the people around her were not shocked since such persons had a full understanding of her case, because they upheld an ideology similar to hers. In the case of the male key informants, while the happiness of relatives and friends for the safety of the former revolutionary was clear, there was the bothersome allegation by comrades that one subject had become a traitor.

These impressions are either confirmed or denied in other forms of interaction that our key informants had partaken with other sectors of the community.

Their survival strategies and job hunting immediately after discontinuance from the movement are worth mentioning. Except for four males, the compulsion to provide for basic needs of their respective families was the very motivation of the key informants to resort to various techniques and strategies of survival. Most of them underscore the strong desire to take care of one's own family of procreation, transcending impediments in an environment quite different from that in which they had moved about in the past for at least 5 years.

The declarations of our female key informants about their experiences in job hunting illustrate some differentiations between them and the male key informants. Whereas the former state that they have had no adverse experiences while job hunting, the latter experienced being despised, being treated small, or being treated as ignorant. They also experienced being subjected to insults, or, at best, being ignored or unattended to.

Application to present work of competence gained in the movement

Interestingly, the former revolutionaries enthuse about the large extent of application to the present job of the competence that they had realized while engaged in the movement. Even co-workers/ employers, according to our key informants, marvel at the practical application to the

present occupation of the knowledge and skills attained while they were still active in the movement.

Obviously, the skills training for organizing, the conduct of medical services, communication, writing, planning, budget preparation, reporting, facilitation of education discussions, and assessment/evaluation, are serving well most of the former revolutionaries in their present job. This recalls what Pimentel (2006) and Bello (1992) say about how the men and women (of the revolution) ... over the decades, had gone separate ways. Some had become officers of certain government agencies, or business leaders, or artists and writers.

Experiences in relating with people in the community

There had been differentiations in the experiences of the female key informants and the male ones, in terms of their experiences in relating with the people in the community. While our key informants among the females declare fairness of treatment by the community, the male key informants state otherwise. They reveal that they had experienced hearing the anti-rebel sentiments of a barangay official, or experienced anti-rebel treatment in the workplace. One says he had experienced fair treatment when staying in the residential area of mass members of the community.

Discussion

It is recalled that the tasks of the females in the movement had been to constitute part of the medical team that accompanied the armed unit. Or, they had been assigned in the white area (cities) to organize the urban poor or workers, or engage in alliance-building. As for the male key informants, while some had undertaken medical and organizing tasks, they had been the primary combatants. It is curious that it would be the males, the ones whose primary task was the exercise of military might in the armed unit of the CPP-NPA, who had been subjected to insults and threats in their dealings with the people in the community where they would spend their life as non-combatants. One surmises that these adverse situations, even during their job-hunting days mentioned above, had surfaced due to bias of the concerned people around them who

had known about their previous involvement in the armed units and who regard them as men hardened by years of armed struggle.

Adjustments made

We asked our key informants about the adjustments that they made to be relevant in the new environment. The females have varied answers. One says she felt no difficulty adjusting to the present situation. Another admits she had to make major adjustments in relating with people. She expresses shock at the extreme difference in lifestyle. In general, the adjustments had to be made to enable the persons who had been used to collective life to function in an environment which is marked by a strong sense of individualism.

One form of adjustment to the present environment constitutes deliberate attempts to mingle with others. Another says he shall keep things to himself hereon and be a plain citizen. The concern of the above is the manner of adjusting to the kind of life being led in the urban areas. One former revolutionary was concerned with other matters, namely, ensuring that he would not cause any harm on former comrades and that he continue upholding the principles of the movement.

Assessment of life after inactivation in the CPP-NPA

In regard to their self-assessment, the females declare that life has had many changes. They had been blending in the environment or flowing with the tide. But their ideology and principles remain unchanged. One expresses the apprehension about being engulfed in the system. This same assessment is expressed by the males. In addition to the former, a revelation of one of the males demonstrates essentially a gradual modification of their experience, from the time of their job-hunting and the first few years in their job to the present. They observe that in the long run, they had gained the respect of the community.

As to livelihood, almost all declare that only the basic needs are met by their earnings. By their declarations, it appears that they do not lead comfortable lives.

We ask if they have established communication with anyone in the movement. And if so, how do they regard the status of the movement

now. Two of the three females believe that the movement is gaining ground. Two males, like the two females, believe that it is gaining ground, improving its strategy, tactical offensive techniques, and getting stronger physically. Another says organizing has been neglected with the present focus of the movement on the armed struggle. Two have no access to information.

Would they consider returning to the movement? Only one, Denver, declares that would return to the mountains in service of the movement as the need for him there is strong. This, despite his physical disability.

Perceptions about the Philippine situation

How, now, do the former revolutionaries regard the situation in the country? The responses are consistent even as these are stated differently. All declare that the situation in the Philippines is worsening. Among the females, the description includes blatant commission of atrocities, painting over people's sufferings, heightening dollar exchange rate. In addition, the male key informants discuss the following in colorful language: unjust system of governance, corruption among government officials, blatant violation of law, disrespect for human rights, and a downhill economy dominated by foreign capital. It will do well to be reminded of the discussion about elite-dominated governments in KPD, 2008. As stated therein (p. 2) a system of unjust social, political, and economic structures has been generated by a colonial past and a history of elite-dominated governments. This system has, for long, benefitted a powerful few while the majority of Filipinos remain impoverished and marginalized. The problem of corruption has plagued the Philippines. Recent developments observed by different sectors in society and discussed in mass media underscore the violation of law, highlighting patronage politics and contradictions in principle and practice in national government agencies, as well as, in state institutions for law-making.

Literature is rife with accounts about the authoritarianism of the Marcos regime, about martial law, and about the CPP-NPA. Rocamora (1993) describes, in eloquent terms, the recovery of the revolutionary movement in the martial law years, continuing till 1987. The movement

had held leadership in the anti-dictatorship struggle. Mass-organizing was large-scale, international solidarity work expanded, guerilla warfare intensified. These conditions are what our key informants await to obtain now, 20 or so years after, in their desire to see something seriously done about the worsening situation of Philippine society. Of course, historically, the conditions may not be duplicated. But as the former revolutionaries in Tagum City do wish, the people should be awakened to mobilize and take action.

Perceptions about the success of the revolution

Our study presupposes that certain configurations of situations have brought about the former revolutionaries' perception of the revolution. These situations are: the personal circumstances of the key informants before they joined the movement; the nature of their experiences in the family and in the community before joining the CPP-NPA; the conditions prompting their decision to join the CPP-NPA; the nature of the experiences acquired as members of the CPP-NPA; the conditions/factors that provoked the key informants' inactivation in, or discontinuance from, the movement; the circumstances that the key informants face upon discontinuance from the movement; the nature of support systems after discontinuance from, or inactivation in, the movement. In this study, we also study their perspectives about society believed to impinge upon their perceptions of the revolution.

Given the totality of these experiences, all key informants perceive the revolution to win. One male subject underscores the vital role that is played by the leaders. Accordingly, the number of competent leaders spells the difference between winning or losing.

In relating the story of the revolution in Nicaragua, Walker (1986) details political events leading up to the revolution in Nicaragua and the subsequent national reconstruction programs undertaken by the successful revolutionaries. As well, it narrates the evolution of the anti-imperialist economic systems following the Sandinist economic policy. Its evolutionary social programs had been meant to address culture and society. Implantation of this integrated development orientation after a revolution succeeds may well be the situation that our key informants dream about for own country.

Finally, we asked our key informants if they believed there were other ways of attaining change in the conditions that the people had long been dissatisfied with. All declared there were none. Only a revolution.

Conclusion

In examining the concrete realities that confront the key informants engaged in conflictful situations, this study, in general, shows the context of these concrete realities, namely, the upswings and crises in the economic and social development of the nation in history. This study reveals that these crises had, in fact, constituted concrete conditions encouraging conflict.

In particular, this study demonstrates that the personal circumstances of the former revolutionaries and their experiences in the family and community stimulate the confluence of conditions prompting the decision to join the movement. Such experiences, in fact, reflect relative deprivation, or rising human aspirations, which factors, we know, are those that prompt the emergence of a social movement. Also, this paper describes the past conditions used as points of reference, or the abstract ideals articulated by various persons and groups with whom the key informants had been in contact in their life history. Data analyzed underscore how the personal circumstances of the former revolutionaries and other conditions, like relationships in the family and in the community, had actually contributed to the nature of relationships that they would nurture in the movement that they joined.

As joiners of the CPP-NPA, the key informants subscribed to the standards articulated by the leaders of the CPP-NPA which had become their reference group. This is clearer in their acceptance of the movement's visions and direction, as well as, in undertaking the programs that prescribe collective decision-making, not only in planning, in assessment, in criticism-self criticism, in the conduct of assigned tasks, etc., but also in courtship and marriage, and in other programs involving services rendered to the community. This study shows that the tasks undertaken in service to the community -- organizing, propaganda work, helping in farm work and in the household chores of the masses, community projects, land reform, regulating the aggressiveness of bullies in the community -- had paved the way even better for integration of the revolutionary movement in the community.

This study demonstrates that these various experiences within the movement had taken root in the life of the key informants. The range of their learnings is extensive -- from the ideological (knowledge about basic problems of the country and about principles guiding the search for options addressing the problems), to the pragmatic (skills training in organizing, communication and facilitating, medical services, participatory planning, leadership, collective decision-making, even in farmwork, and completion of household chores), to the personal (adjusting to each other's different personalities). Certain of these experiences had engendered insights and enabled the acquisition of particular competencies that mark the special character of our key informants, competencies which they actualize in their present occupations. Emergent from certain other experiences had been sentiments and frustrations against the very same group that they had held in high regard, that had been their reference group.

The study proves that a confluence of factors -- social, political, ideological, physical, and emotional -- had provoked discontinuance from the movement. These include the desire or compulsion to perform the basic functions of rearing their own children, fear of eminent danger to own family, or saving them from captivity as hostages, and actual captivity of the revolutionary himself/herself. The disagreement with the political direction of the CPP-NPA in operating internal systems and the internal conflicts themselves also impinged on the revolutionary's decision to separate from the movement. Physical disability had been another vital and decisive provocation. Taking all previous circumstances into account, and other factors, the key informants resorted to either of two major resultant modes of separation: surrender, or "lie low." Surrender by the former revolutionaries entails formal submission to the authorities. Some surrenderees had been suspected of turning informers for the military. "Lie low" refers to the action of simply quietly dissociating oneself from the movement, neither surrendering formally to, nor turning informer for, the military.

The revolutionary tackled another stage in her/his life as s/he started to confront the world outside the CPP-NPA after surrender, or, upon "lie low." Skills training within the movement, on the one hand, had helped cushion the impact of, and prepare for, the new life outside the CPP-NPA. Clearly though, the individualistic nature of this new stage outside the movement contravened the participatory and collective nature

of life in the movement. This same background distinguishing the former revolutionaries had, especially for the men perceived as hardened by years of combating the military, also spawned situations in which some of them had been subjected to verbal abuse as early as in their job hunting days and in the immediate period of assuming their duties in the new job. This situation had, in the long run, gradually transformed to one in which what prevails would be respect for the former revolutionary.

An assumption held by the researchers is proven, namely, that the life history of the key informants is the historical function of the confluence of personal circumstances, family and community exposures, actual experiences in the CPP-NPA, and experiences after inactivation therein. A large number are now much older, seasoned by years of struggling underground, still fighting government, still affirming their commitment to the ideas they embraced at the start. They have become part of the generation of scores of politically conscious activists who are in government or, as Pimentel (2006) and Bello (1992) would say, are now the mainstays of NGOs (non-government organizations), POs (people's organizations), and are now replacing the traditional political organizations of the left as the backbone of the "new movement." Although majority do not wish to return to the CPP-NPA due to their acknowledged old age, the former revolutionaries have retained their revolutionary beliefs and ideology.

This same confluence of conditions allows them to view how, even in the present, the incompatible, increasing, and broadening human aspirations of the peoples in the Philippines are unsatisfied by existing institutions. The past institutional failure to provide the means to address widening aspirations which cause revolutions to occur had degenerated in the present, intensifying the fervor of the movement.

The former revolutionaries believe that, with the employment of improved revolutionary strategies and techniques, with the assumption of better leaders, as well as, development of stronger and more members, the movement can better respond to the aggravating crisis of the nation. For the former revolutionaries, the revolution shall win. And the struggle continues.

Recommendations

A. For studies to be conducted on the following:

1. situation of children in armed conflict, not only in Tagum City, but Mindanao-wide, and the various processes of socialization of children of revolutionaries
2. perceptions of former revolutionaries about the various splits in the CPP-NPA, their level of knowledge about the causes and consequences of such splits, their opinions about the assassination of former revolutionaries
3. employment of former revolutionaries in private and public agencies, formal and informal institutions, including as personal body guards of politicians, or as members of death squads

B. For methods

1. To strengthen the technique, the historical method be tested in other areas and in other topics
2. To thresh out the difficulties of combining thematic analysis, content analysis, with the method of life history, more attempts be made in the simultaneous use of these techniques

C. For ensuring policy relevance

1. Assessment be made of the various programs of government meant for returnees in terms of program design, accessibility, and impact
2. Assessment be made of various development programs of government which result to, or worsen all the more, the particular sociopolitical environment that serves as the breeding ground for armed conflict

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Appendices

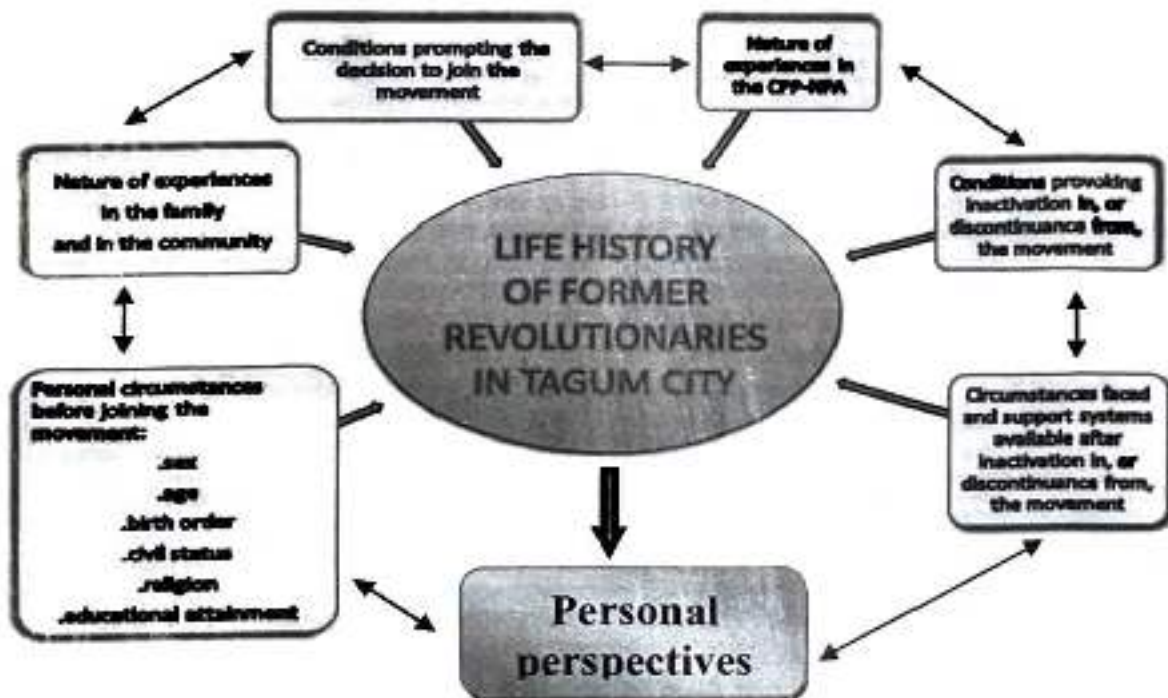


Figure No. 1. Schematic diagram of the conceptual framework of the study.



Figure No. 2. Map showing location of Tagum City.

Table No. 1. Summary profile of the former revolutionaries.

Characteristics	Ella	Rose	Helen	Gilbert	Ricardo	Waway	Denver	Jollie
Sex	female	female	female	male	male	male	male	male
Present Age (upon entry)	48	50	50	39	44	48	48	50
Age (upon entry)	20	24	22	14	15	19	21	22
Educational Attainment (upon entry)	high school graduate	1 st year college	4th year college	elem school graduate	high school graduate	2 nd year college	3 rd year high school	3 rd year high school
Religion	R. Catholic	R. Catholic	Protestant	Born Again	R. Catholic	R. Catholic	R. Catholic	R. Catholic
Civil Status (upon entry)	single	single	single	single	single	single	single	single
Year of Entry to the Movement	1980	1981	1980	1981	1977	1978	1981	1979
Year of Inactivation in the Movement	1988	1989	1990	1989	1988	1983	1994	1987
No. of Years in the Movement	8 years	8 years	10 years	8 years	11 years	5 years	13 years	8 years
Age Upon Inactivation in the Movement	28	32	33	22	26	24	34	30
Last Position in the Movement	member, medical team/paramedics	chair of finance committee	front secretary	combatant	commander (of an armed unit)	front secretary	member, medical team/paramedics	district secretary
Mode of Separation	lie low after captivity	lie low after captivity	formal surrender, voluntary	formal surrender, voluntary	formal surrender, voluntary	formal surrender after captivity	lie low due to physical disability	lie low

Present Educational Attainment	college grad. (Nursing Aide)	1 st year college	elem school graduate	high school graduate	college grad. (B.S. Criminology)	3 rd year high school	3 rd year high school
Present Occupation	development work, NGO	social work	farming	political alliance work, public service	police work	acupuncture	maintenance, public market
Present Monthly Income	P6,000.00	P8,000.00	P3,000.00	P5,000.00	P18,000.00	P2,500.00	P8,000.00
Present Civil Status	married	widow	married	married	married	married	married
Perception About the Present Situation of the country	Situation is worsening with commission of atrocities by govt.	System of governance is worst.	Situation is worsening due to the unjust system of governance.	Poverty is worse due to corrupt government officials.	There is a blatant violation of law.	Is worsening, with cases of disrespect for human rights.	No development due to a downhill economy dominated by foreign capital.
Present Views on the Movement and/or Comrades	Is gaining ground with stronger forces.	Members are now "burgis."	There is improvement in techniques.	No idea	No idea	Forces are stronger. Strategy is improved.	Focus is more on armed struggle.