

**High-Cost Activism and the Worker Household:  
Revolutionary Activism among  
Philippine Plantation Workers**

**Rosanne Rutten**

**IIAS/IISG**

Amsterdam, December 1998

## *Contents*

Introduction	4
Social activism: a household strategy?	5
Social activism in the hacienda region of Negros Occidental	10
Hacienda Milagros	11
The household: a locus of conflict and solidarity	12
Household interests and activism in Hda. Milagros	13
How the movement tapped the household for the revolution	16
The ideological framing of household sacrifices for the movement	16
Dealing with costs: conflicts in the household	18
Dealing with costs: clashes between movement leaders and fulltime revolutionaries concerning family-attachments and obligations	20
Networks and competing loyalties	21
Defining social activism as a feasible and expedient option	22
Conclusion: The household as a moving target of analysis	23
References	25



## *Introduction*

Why do poor workers engage in high-cost activism that demands from themselves and their households considerable material sacrifices and physical risks while the benefits for their households appear relatively small and insecure?

This question struck me when I returned in 1992 to one of the major sugarcane plantation regions of Southeast Asia, the Philippine province of Negros Occidental, home of some 200,000 plantation workers, where I had done research some fifteen years before.<sup>1</sup> During the first research in 1977-78, I had lived in a plantation (“Hacienda Milagros”) where workers were taking the first steps towards collective action and were forming a local chapter of a labor union, gradually achieving success. Inspired by the theory on household living-strategies, I explained the activism of the workers as a sensible strategy to defend and improve the income and living conditions of their households, as they sought to raise wages, improve housing, enforce coverage by the state’s social security system and medicare, and safeguard stable employment – though the workers did encounter some repression by the planter and police at first. The strategic role of married women in workers’ collective protests, I argued, stemmed from their role as managers of the household and keepers of the household budget, a role that was publicly acknowledged and that allowed these women to take up a central role as the workers’ spokespersons towards the planter, police, and other relevant parties. Thus, the relationship between household subsistence interests and social activism seemed clear-cut, the one reinforcing the other (Rutten 1982).

But things had changed when I revisited Negros Occidental some fourteen years later. In the late 1970s-1980s, many of the workers of Hacienda Milagros, and a large number in the plantation region at large, had joined or supported a communist guerrilla movement, the CPP-NPA (Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army). Their support declined only in the late 1980s-early 1990s as the government military took control after almost two decades of intensive counterinsurgency activities. I heard numerous stories of risks and sacrifices: men and women neglected their household duties to become activists, teenaged children left home to do unpaid, high-risk work as fulltime activists in the movement, married activists parted with their babies in order to continue their fulltime work for the revolution, and worker-households that stayed behind were vulnerable to repression either by the military or by guerrilla fighters. Four men of Hda. Milagros had been killed by the government military or paramilitary forces; three of these men were fulltime activists of the movement at the time of their death.

---

1. The present research is part of a larger project on the rise and decline of popular support for the revolutionary movement CPP-NPA from the perspective of two communities in Negros Occidental, a lowland sugarcane plantation and an upland village. Fieldwork was done in the hacienda in 1977-78, 1992, and early 1995, and in the village in 1992 and 1995. Starting 1992, the research was financed through a grant from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. I was affiliated with the Institute of Philippine Culture at Ateneo de Manila University in 1992, and in 1993-94 with the Center for Studies of Social Change at the New School for Social Research, New York. This paper is a revised version of a paper presented to the Workshop on "Living Strategies," International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 28-29 November 1997. Thanks are due to Willem van Schendel and other workshop participants for their comments.

All these sacrifices to household interests and family attachments were made with an uncertain outcome in view. Moreover, in many cases these sacrifices were not accepted by all members of the household, but involved intra-household conflicts. To interpret workers' involvement in this high-risk, high-cost activism as a "household living strategy," then, would leave much unexplained. Here, I take up this theme to discuss some salient aspects in the ambiguous relationship between worker households and activism.

### *Social activism: a household strategy?*

The household or family is one of the main social and economic units that shape people's interests, responsibilities, and loyalties. To understand why people support and join a social movement some scholars have, therefore, looked at the household/family unit for relevant motivating factors.

Studies on *poor people's* movements, such as labor and peasant movements and rural revolutionary movements, tend to focus on the economic unit of the *household*, and perceive the economic (subsistence) interests of the household as the main driving force of collective action. Studies on so-called new social movements (such as religious or ethnic movements) whose primary claims are not the protection or improvement of material living conditions tend to deal with the social unit of the *family*, and stress such aspects as identity formation and the family as a locus of mobilization (e.g. McCarthy 1996: 141-42).

### *Merits of the household living-strategies approach*

The household living-strategies approach has a decided advantage over an earlier explanation of poor-people's activism, which presupposed an amorphous mass of people that reaches the "boiling point" and "explodes" into collective action because of an accumulation of ill-defined frustrations and grievances. In contrast to this "volcanic model" of collective action (Aya 1990: 21-49), the focus on household living strategies promotes an analysis that is actor-oriented, that takes account of choice situations and decisionmaking processes, and may take the study of motives and opportunities seriously.

The view that social ties (in this case the network of household relations) mediate between individual interests and intentions on the one hand, and collective action on the other, is also a useful correction to some strains in social-movement theory which presuppose more or less atomistic individuals reacting to impersonal forces. In this sense, it connects to studies on micromobilization, which deal with the influence of personal ties on people's decisions to engage in activism (e.g. Snow et al. 1986).

The costs and risks of activism may become more visible through a focus on household survival. Activism requires contributions in money, goods, and manpower that have to be accommodated somehow by the activists' households, and these costs may set the limits to people's activism. As Hobsbawm noted, "peasant agitations must stop for the harvest. However militant peasants are, the cycle of their labours shackles them to their fate" (1973/74: 12). Moreover, the physical risks of activism may create an additional emotional burden for the household members of activists.

Finally, the notion that activism is part of a household strategy suggests that collective action may be but one of the possible options that people consider. Finding out why people

opt for activism rather than another type of action, or how they combine social activism with other lines of action, may help gain a better insight into the considerations that motivate or constrain it (Scott 1976: 194-95, Van der Linden 1993).

***Problematic assumption: a direct link between household interests and activism***

Studies that view poor people primarily as defenders of the interests of their households tend to assume a direct link between household interests and collective action: poor people take collective action when the subsistence interests of their households are threatened (e.g. Adas 1981, Scott 1976, Wickham-Crowley 1991, Waterbury 1975), and/or when their activism is rewarded with tangible benefits to their households, such as access to land, protection, and low-cost credit (e.g. Popkin 1988, Race 1972).

However, the notion that household interests are the driving force of poor-people's activism entails the risk that scholars "explain" activism retrospectively as a household living strategy without adequate evidence that this is indeed so. This is encouraged by several assumptions that underlie the household living-strategies approach:

a) *The household: unity of interests or conflicting interests?*

The household strategies approach assumes that poor people have primarily the interests of their household in mind. In studies on poor people's activism, this view is reflected in a conflation of individual and household interests. Statements such as: "peasants whose survival is in immediate question will recognize the common cause and rise up" (Waterbury 1975: 440) equate "peasants" with peasant householders, assume they act in the interest of their whole household, and neglect to specify whether other household members might object to "rising up." Even some studies inspired by rational-choice theory – which explicitly distinguishes between individual and group interests – nevertheless combine individual and household interests into a diffuse category of "individual" interests, and thereby skirt the issue of a possible conflict of interests between individual and household. When Popkin (1988: 11) notes that "peasants are self-interested, and that means that they are concerned with individual benefits, not group benefits" when contemplating participation in collective action, then he includes economic benefits for the household under "individual benefits," and refers to social entities that transcend the household as "groups."

However, as Diane Wolf has argued, the assumption of "household unity and consensus in pursuing one collective goal" ignores "intra-household conflict, inequality, and exploitation and basically views household unity as unproblematic." Moreover, it assumes that "individuals within the household sublimate their own wishes to [the] larger goal" of defending the collective good of the household. (Wolf 1992: 14-15)

Not all people identify equally with the interests of their household. Decisions within households about whether or not to participate in collective action often involves conflicts and negotiations. Studying such intra-household conflicts can illuminate to what extent the activism of *individual* household members actually reflects a *household* living strategy that is supported and approved of by the household as a whole.

Conversely, intra-household or intra-family conflicts may foster individual support for a social movement. In her study on peasant participation in the national independence war in Zimbabwe, Norma Kriger (1992) found, for instance, that gender and generational

conflicts motivated women and young men to support the guerrilla movement as a means to improve their position vis-à-vis (older) men.

b) *Is the household the main social unit that commands people's loyalty?*

It is assumed that people feel primarily loyal and responsible towards their own household, and that responsibilities towards other people and social entities take the back seat. This household-centered view of individuals tends to ignore that social ties with people outside the household “create obligations that may conflict with responsibilities as members of a household” (Collins 1986: 667).

Hence, by assuming that poor people turn activist to protect the interests of their household, we could easily neglect other social networks and organizations that may shape their interests, responsibilities, and willingness to engage in collective action. We need to place, therefore, such “multiple social embeddings” of individuals at the center of our research: by studying the specific obligations and interests that each set of relations fosters among the people involved, we can explore how these social ties may facilitate or work against participation in collective action (McAdam and Paulsen 1993: 640, 642). This approach is apparent in recent studies that deal with the relational basis of “political identities,” and the identity-changes that may result from an involvement in shifting networks (e.g. Calhoun 1991, Tilly 1998: 218). Several earlier studies on peasant collective action similarly argued that peasants’ involvement in wider social and political networks (in particular those of social movements) could change their perceived interests and goals (Migdal 1974: 251-52), and that shifts in local power relations could foster “new conceptions of identity and self-worth among the peasantry” (Popkin 1988: 60). Migdal and Popkin both refer to peasants whose long-term involvement in revolutionary organizations changed their perceived interests from a focus on individual and household gains, to the collective gains of a much larger population. All these studies clearly counter the notion that people are motivated by one fixed set of single-group interests.

The household, then, is but one of many social entities that may claim the loyalty of individual (potential) activists. Studies that do take account of the multiple networks in which (potential) activists are involved, tend to focus on those networks that promote activism (e.g. Gould 1991). But embeddedness in multiple networks may also entail competing claims – claims on the individual that may constrain activism. Sets of social relationships can be “demanding in regard to time, energy, and emotional attachment,” and may “constitute countervailing influences” and commitments “with respect to alternative networks and lines of action” (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980: 793). For instance, “institutions, such as household, corporation, and union, {may} compete with one another for the time and allegiances of individuals and, in so doing, constrain individual decisions to engage in activism,” as Cornfield, Cavalcanti Filho, and Chun (1990: 132) argue in their study of women’s participation in a Tennessee union.

Household and social movement may thus compete for the commitment and resources of their members. Social movements try to create and retain commitment – compliance with felt obligations – by developing among (potential) members a network of social ties along which they can reward compliance and punish non-compliance by ideological, social, or other means (cf. Hechter 1990). Radical or underground movements whose cadres engage in high-risk activism attempt to maximize the commitment of their members by trying to

monopolize their social networks and isolate them from competing ties (cf. Coser 1974). Ties with family members and with spouses or lovers, in particular, entail emotional attachments and responsibilities that may weaken the activists' commitment to the movement and their willingness to take high risks (Goodwin 1997).

### c) *Strategies*

The assumption that poor people act on the basis of "household strategies" (long-term plans of action for the benefit of the household) may tempt authors to interpret specific actions as the concrete expressions of household strategies without concrete evidence that this is so:

Most studies focus only on the outcome of behavior, presuming that the logic motivating household decisions is revealed in crystallized form by the outcome of those decisions. ... The existence or nonexistence of explicit goals and the nature of their content and time frame are questions for empirical research ... If households have no explicit objectives and merely respond to one set of circumstances after another, then the concept of strategy becomes synonymous with the household's history. ... Like the concept of adaptation, that of strategy can lose its meaning to the extent that it becomes *a mere functionalist label applied ex post facto to whatever behavior is found*. (Schmink 1984: 95; emphasis added).

Some authors argue for replacing the term "household strategies" with a term that is "less tautological and teleological" and more neutral, such as "household practices", which "imputes fewer motives to the actors" and leaves it to researchers to determine empirically to what extent activities are indeed part of household strategies (Wolf 1992: 20, 263).

### d) *A non-cultural view?*

It is often assumed that people shape their household strategies in response to the opportunities and constraints they face. A shift towards social activism is then explained by shifts in these opportunities and constraints. However, people's living strategies not only depend on the material or strategic options that are actually available. They are also cultural and social constructs (Van der Linden 1993: 166). People define certain strategies as feasible and desirable, and internalize such definitions through socialization. Such definitions are subject to change. Hence, cultural notions affect people's weighing of available options. In the Philippine plantation region of Negros Occidental, for instance, social activism gained in "respectability" among plantation workers as a result of social and ideological changes, as will be elaborated further below.

### ***Household interests versus high-risk/high-cost activism***

The household living-strategies approach cannot adequately explain why people engage in activism that entails high costs and high risks for their households while providing insecure returns – in particular, fulltime participation in a revolutionary guerrilla movement. A common explanation in terms of household interests states that poor people engage in such activism only when they are forced to react to an acute household subsistence crisis or an acute danger to the physical survival of themselves or other household members. In the area



of my research, however, these conditions did not apply to many of the workers who had become fulltime members of the guerrilla movement.

Studies inspired by the rational-choice approach, on the other hand, argue that people engage in high-cost and high-risk activism when the high costs they incur are matched by high rewards. Rewards include material benefits for the activists' households (material goods acquired through collective action, such as land in the case of peasant movements) and, for individual activists, social rewards such as status and power within the activist organization. However, these studies fail to consider that the interests of individual activists and their households may clash. Individual rewards for activists may be achieved at considerable cost to their households, which may lose more to the activist cause than they gain, and may bear substantial risks of repression.

In Hacienda Milagros, the material benefits to the households of fulltime revolutionaries were minimal compared to the material and emotional costs. Though many parents and siblings of fulltimers did admire the activism of their child, sister, or brother – supported by the prevailing revolutionary discourse that stressed the value of sacrifice and martyrdom – they were also burdened by anguish and experienced his or her absence as a material loss and as a missed contribution to household uplift by safer means.

In many cases, it was *against* the will of their parents and against the interests of their households at large that sons and daughters decided to engage in the high-risk and high-cost activism of fulltime revolutionaries. What facilitated their move was their increasing *detachment* from their families, in social and emotional terms. A crucial point is that the majority of plantation workers who joined the guerrilla movement as fulltimers were young single men and women, who identified the least with the immediate interests of their households compared to their parents and younger siblings, and who, in their pre-marriage state, were not yet committed to a new household of their own. It was, then, their relatively weak commitment to their own households that made them “biographically available” for high-risk activism (cf. McAdam 1986).

For these activists, new circles of identification (activist peer-groups and the revolutionary movement) and a new ideology had been instrumental in refocusing the object of their personal responsibilities and loyalties away from the “narrow” focus on their households and towards the movement and the “oppressed people” at large. An extreme expression of such a redefinition of personal commitments is the willingness to sacrifice one's life for the common good, to become a “martyr.” This redefinition of identity is supported by the individual's active network of movement cadres and supporters who form new, influential reference groups.

Martyrdom and household interests seem to fit badly. From the vantage point of the household living-strategies approach, the following remark by the mother of activist sons would be truly baffling: ““As for my sons, I'll feel proud if they get killed for a holy cause”” (Mahmood 1996: 105). The woman was part of a Sikh community in Canada and supported the movement for a free Khalistan; her immediate family was not physically or economically threatened at the time. Among this community, family members apparently shared the commitment to the wider cause of the Sikh, a commitment reproduced through active ideological work and community-based social control, and supported considerable sacrifices by close kin (though the author may have refrained from searching for deviant cases). This shared, family-based commitment apparently resolved the potential conflict between household and high-risk activism. Interestingly, ethnographic studies that do deal with this

socio-cultural aspect of identity shifts are primarily studies on high-risk activists whose households are economically quite secure, such as the militant Sikh migrants in Canada, and Basque activists of the ETA (Mahmood 1996, Zulaika 1988).

There is, then, a marked distinction in studies on high-cost and high-risk activism: When the activists are poor workers or peasants, researchers tend to employ the “household-strategies” paradigm that views the activists primarily as defenders of the interests of their households. Under conditions of poverty, it is assumed, the quest for the material and social security and advancement of one’s household overrules all other concerns. Given this assumption, researchers are ill-equipped to recognize shifts in people’s perceptions of their life-worlds and of their responsibilities and loyalties in it, in particular when these involve a weakening of people’s identification with their own households (exceptions are studies that consider the effects of poor people’s involvement in social-movement organizations, such as Migdal 1974 and Race 1972). On the other hand, when the activists are relatively well-off, researchers tend to employ the “cultural identity” paradigm. They focus precisely on such shifts in identities and loyalties, and neglect the more mundane concerns of household livelihood and household responsibilities.

In the following, I discuss and illustrate some of the points argued above, by exploring how worker households of one Philippine sugarcane plantation, Hacienda Milagros, have dealt with the problem of the costs and risks of activism.

### *Social activism in the hacienda region of Negros Occidental*

The province of Negros Occidental, on the Central-Philippine island of Negros, is one of the main sugar-producing regions in Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup> The product of its several thousand sugarcane haciendas and some fifteen sugar centrals is sold on export and domestic markets. The haciendas range in size from about twenty to over a thousand hectares (the majority falls in the 20-150 hectares range), and are mostly owned by planter families that live in the province’s towns or Manila. Some 200,000 wage-dependent workers (women and men) do back-breaking labor in the canefields and survive precariously on low and irregular wages. Permanent workers living with their families on hacienda premises, and casual workers living on or near haciendas, plow, plant, weed, and cut the ripe cane, and are joined by migrant canecutters in the harvesting season.

Personal dependency has long marked the ties between workers and planters in Negros Occidental. Organized forms of collective action developed slowly. In the first half of this century, two millenarian movements, followed by several workers’ mutual-aid societies (controlled by urban intellectuals and politicians), had a following among hacienda workers in scattered parts of the island, but they did not last long. Planter repression thwarted union efforts in the 1950s and 1960s.

Ironically, it was only after the declaration of martial law in 1972 by then President Ferdinand Marcos, that labor unions gradually gained a foothold in haciendas. Facilitating

---

2. Studies on the plantation society of Negros Occidental include Aguilar (1994), Larkin (1993), McCoy (1991), O’Brien (1993), Runes (1939), and Rutten (1982, 1996a).

factors were the state's (partial) control of planter violence, and the president's effort to court the worker population by proclaiming new minimum wage laws and welfare measures, and having these widely aired over the media. Moreover, in reaction to the martial-law regime, a growing part of the provincial Roman Catholic clergy radicalized politically. They started a movement for organizing hacienda workers and poor villagers into so-called Basic Christian Communities (BCC), which served not only as communities of worship, but also as organizations for collective claim-making vis-à-vis the planters and the state. These BCCs would form the organizational nuclei for many hacienda-based chapters of the new, militant labor union, the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW).

Opportunities for workers' collective action further increased with the expansion across the province of a revolutionary movement, the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA). The CPP-NPA, henceforth called "NPA" in this paper, was founded in Manila as a Maoist movement with a nationwide scope. Student activists established its first rural base in Negros Occidental in the southern peasant uplands in the early 1970s, and local NPA organizers expanded into the hacienda lowlands in the late 1970s and 1980s (Nicdao n.d.: 3, Jones 1989: 92-93). By 1986, some 100,000 peasants and hacienda workers across Negros had joined the NPA's community-based mass organizations, and some 450 guerrilla fighters, recruited from the local population, were fielded across the island, backed up by several thousand community militias (Coronel 1991: 658, 660, 665, 669). Decline of NPA strength set in as the new government of President Aquino (1986-92) launched a concerted counterinsurgency drive coupled to an amnesty program, and as the revolutionary leadership split over issues of strategy and leadership.

### *Hacienda Milagros*

Hacienda Milagros is an average-sized sugarcane hacienda (130 hectares) located in the lowlands, with some sixty wage-earning families living and working on its land. The planter lives with his family in the provincial capital, a half-hour jeep ride away. A resident overseer and two or three foremen make up the local management; they are, together with several drivers of trucks and tractors, the only salaried employees (*empleados*) in the hacienda. The resident workers (men, women, teenagers, and some children) are paid daily or piece-rate wages. Their low and irregular income has long spelled poverty, marked by malnourishment, illnesses like tuberculosis, and low levels of education. Conditions have somewhat improved in the last twenty years, partly brought about by workers' successful collective actions: infant mortality declined, more children are able to attend high school, and several worker and *empleado* families presently own battery-powered television sets. But the cramped houses lack latrines and electricity, and many families cannot cover basic costs of medicine and education.

Workers of Hda. Milagros took advantage of the different opportunities for organization and collective action: They first organized into a Basic Christian Community in the mid-1970s, then joined a moderate labor union to claim legal benefits (13th month pay) which the planter finally provided after he had locked out several active union members. They subsequently joined the leftwing union NFSW which helped improve labor conditions, and were eventually mobilized to support the NPA. By the mid-1980s the NPA considered

the hacienda a “consolidated area.” In this period, the NPA backed up workers’ actions for better wages and benefits, while extracting an increasing flow of contributions from the worker households for the benefit of the movement at large. Workers’ support for the NPA declined in the late 1980s-early 1990s as counterinsurgency activities intensified and as the movement split in two rivaling factions.

### *The household: a locus of conflict and solidarity*

In Hda. Milagros, the people who form a household and need to keep it afloat are members of the nuclear family plus, in several cases, one or two grandparents or a married daughter or son with spouse and child. They live together under the same roof, and, to a varying degree, share a single budget and pool their labor and resources. When a young couple lives with the parents of wife or husband, it may handle its own budget. The local terms for household refer to the people that live in “one house” or “under one roof.”

Culturally, the various responsibilities are prescribed as follows: The husband is the main income provider and should turn over his income to his wife. The wife is the “keeper of the house” who controls the household budget and whose task it is to “stretch the peso” and make ends meet. Children, from an early age, are expected to help with household chores and later to contribute to household income, and it is primarily their mothers who are responsible for disciplining their children to take up these tasks. In reality, most women in the hacienda are providers as well, by necessity, but they tend to view their wage-work in the canefields or their work as small-scale traders or laundrywomen as a means of “helping their husbands.”

Though many households in the hacienda indeed display a considerable amount of sharing of labor and pooling of income, the burdens are often unequally divided. This is a source of conflict and bargaining, which workers generally refer to as “problems in the household.” Some men refuse to hand over their income to their wife, or “roam around” with their male friends instead of helping around the house. Some women and men spend a sizable part of the household budget on drinks and gambling. And many teenaged children are unwilling to help in the house or to share their wage-earnings as much as their parents expect them to. Given the intensive social life in the hacienda, peers, kin, and neighbors are major competitors to the loyalty, time and resources of household members.

### *Household interests and activism in Hda. Milagros*

To feed, clothe, and house the members of their household adequately, and to finance the education of their children, is indeed an important goal for workers of Hda. Milagros. It is a major source of daily worries and conversations.

### *Household living practices in pre-activist days:*

In pre-activist days (up to the 1970s), the following repertoire was more or less standard among the workers of Hda. Milagros: During the milling season – with a high labor demand for harvesting, plowing, and planting – men, women, and older children worked as much as possible in the canefields for a wage. During the lean season in cane cultivation, they fell back on other sources of income: men went to work as construction workers or fish vendors

in the provincial capital Bacolod City, or sought work as carpenters in the hacienda. Women, too, sought extra earnings as small-scale traders of foodstuffs in the area, and they began to invest more labor in their vegetable garden. Their kitchen garden and their raising of a pig or two and some chickens were paying off in these lean months by providing some cash from the sale of these products. These also helped to cover some of the schooling costs of the children. Some households received a monthly remittance from a daughter or son working in the provincial capital or Manila as helpers in the household or as salesgirl or salesboy. Efforts to improve household conditions and raising the life chances of the children included in particular sending one or more children through high school (if financially possible) and allowing one or more children to try their luck in Manila.

Workers tried to improve their life chances and cope with setbacks by banking on individual efforts and on personal ties of assistance: migrating to other haciendas, to the upland frontier, or to the city, and developing a network of ties with (potential) benefactors. Within the hacienda, good personal relationships with the foremen and overseer were rewarded with better access to light work, house-repair materials, and hacienda credit. Workers' personal networks of kin, ritual kin (through the *compadrazgo* system), friends, and neighbors, extending well beyond the hacienda, also served as conduits of help in hard times, though not in the more organized form of mutual aid societies. Workers' protests against planter policies (too little rice credit in the lean season, deficient house repair, and the like), were limited to complaints to the overseer, either individually or in small groups. Given their personal dependency on the planter and overseer for access to work, credit, and any possible improvement in their households' life chances, avoiding "trouble" with these powerful figures was a common-sense strategy of the workers.

### ***Household interests promoting labor activism***

Household subsistence was the focal point of the early labor activism in the hacienda in the 1970s. Workers responded to the mobilizing efforts of labor unions that were pressing for the payment of legal wages and benefits. Informed by radio of the new labor laws, about half of the women and men of Milagros formed a union chapter, and filed a labor case in court for payment of the 13<sup>th</sup> month. They were not pressured by declining living standards, but instead were motivated by the opportunity to earn more, i.e., to claim a benefit they had recently been informed of. They suffered repression by the planter (in particular lock-outs), but eventually were successful in court. Vulnerable to planter repression, however, most workers gave up their membership of this particular union.

Meanwhile, the responsibility of workers to sustain their households was central to the mobilizing work of progressive Catholic clergy. The parish priest and nuns began to organize the workers of Hda. Milagros into a Basic Christian Community, aimed at empowering the workers to defend their interests collectively. They appealed to the right of workers to human dignity, in particular the right to provide their families with a decent livelihood, and they addressed the married workers as "fathers" and "mothers." For the workers, these were meaningful appeals.

As they joined a leftwing labor union, the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW), workers of Milagros continued to stress their familial responsibilities in many collective actions they staged. When they lodged collective complaints against the planter – concerning low rice credits in the lean season (distributed per household), low piece-wages,

too little work, a lack of house repair – they often referred to the need of their families for adequate food and housing. Married women, as managers of their households' finances, were often the spokespersons, sending a powerful message to the planter that they were also speaking in behalf of their families.

### ***Household interests discouraging labor activism: dealing with conflicting interests***

But household interests could also mitigate against labor activism. “If I lose my job, what then? Can the union sustain my family then?” Such concerns with the risks of labor activism were particularly marked during the early days of labor activism in the hacienda, when the risks of planter repression were real. Households of Milagros were divided. Workers had to choose between two conflicting household interests: striving for better labor and living conditions, or protecting their relatively secure position as permanent workers, and possible other ‘privileges’ such as a favorable access to work and house repair through friendly ties with the overseer. At first, many households opted for the last and were reluctant to join collective actions – in particular households with close kin ties to the foremen and overseer. But as the planter gradually turned from repression to accommodation, and organized workers reaped some small successes, most of the reluctant workers eventually joined as well. (Rutten 1991)

Subsequently, another friction between household interests and labor activism arose: competition between household and union for the households' manpower and material resources. Workers who participated in a worker delegation to the planter's house in the city, or who participated in rallies in the city, had to skip a day's work and hence their households lost a worker's daily income. This problem increased as workers got involved, through the union, in a broad leftwing movement that staged numerous rallies against worker exploitation, women's discrimination, human rights abuses, oil price hikes, and the like.

Worker activists sought a solution by means of a system they called “one undivided part” (*isa ka partida*). They arranged that most work in the hacienda was done in large groups on a piece-wage basis. The wage income was shared equally among all workers in each group, including those worker-members who had to skip a day's work to participate in collective actions for a collective good. Workers called the wage-share of these activist workers *consumo*, income to cover their households' basic consumption needs.

Activists also addressed household interests in their effort to solve the free-rider problem – that is, the problem to convince individual workers to invest their time and resources in collective actions whose benefits these workers would reap regardless of their own individual participation. The selective rewards that the worker-officials of the hacienda-based union chapter were able to supply to active union members concerned primarily resources for the household. Active union members were rewarded, for instance, with privileged access to farmlots (small pieces of land that the planter had “loaned” cost-free to worker households for subsistence production, as a result of union pressure), and to union-supplied inputs for these farmlots, such as fertilizer on credit. Negative sanctions included social isolation. For instance, workers unwilling to participate in collective actions were not informed about impending military patrols in the area, and hence could not take measures to protect their families.

### *Explaining support for the revolutionary movement: the limits of a household-interests approach*

Workers' subsequent support for the revolutionary movement NPA consisted of three possible forms of support. Each consecutive form involved more costs and risks:

(1) Providing regular contributions in cash, rice, and other goods, and regular attendance at leftwing rallies in the city: as the NPA gained control over the hacienda, NPA demanded such contributions of all households, on a household basis. (2) Taking up the role of a local part-time activist (without remuneration), which demanded considerable investments in time and increased the risks for oneself and one's household. And (3) leaving home and joining the movement as a mobile, fulltime activist, in return for a very small allowance (to cover the costs of soap and the like): in Hda. Milagros, thirteen young single women and men, and two married men, took this step. Eventually, small allowances for the "dependents" (children of fulltimers) were added, which remained, however, far below subsistence level.

Regarding the first type of support: Here, the notion that there is a direct, positive relationship between household interests and support for a revolutionary movement finds some validation from workers of Milagros. Workers explained to me that they supported the movement (in the form of providing regular contributions in cash and kind) in order to safeguard the gains they had achieved through their union actions, in particular the gains in the security and improvement of household livelihood. In their view, the guerrilla fighters protected union activists and enhanced the bargaining power of workers, by threatening planters with violent reprisals if they would not give in to workers' demands or if they would repress workers' activism. In a considerable number of haciendas, NPA activists burned canefields or tractors of planters unwilling to pay higher wages, and threatened or actually killed overseers who sought to block worker activism. In the absence of a strong state that protects workers' rights, the workers had, for the first time, a powerful supporter that enhanced their bargaining power considerably.

Concerning the second and third type of support: conflicts within households, and between household members and revolutionary activists, reveal considerable tension between the interests of the household (as perceived by part of the household members) and the interests of household members who became activists. Stated simply, parents or spouses of activists felt that the latter acted against the immediate interests of their household. They either tried to dissuade them from their activism (which sometimes involved serious tensions and conflicts within the household), or they became themselves convinced of the need to sacrifice so-called "personal" interests for the interests of a wider community of the poor. I will elaborate these points further below.

### *How the movement tapped the household for the revolution*

The revolutionary movement NPA sought to tap the household as a reservoir of economic and social resources. (The instrumental bias in the following paragraphs reflects the instrumental view of NPA organizers). Contributions to the NPA were levied by household: a monthly contribution of a small can of rice and two pesos (the cash amount was about one-tenth of the daily wage in the mid-1980s); plus occasional contributions, solicited house to

house, for the meals of visiting NPA fighters, for transportation to city-based rallies, or medical emergencies. Besides, hacienda households sheltered and fed organizers and other fulltimers deployed in the hacienda or passing through, and those tending small hacienda stores were asked to provide goods such as cigarettes.

Moreover, the movement could profit from the household as a unit of reproduction and care. Since fulltimers received only minimal allowances from the movement they tried, whenever possible, to solicit such valuable goods as jackets, shoes, and medicine from their own households, through a network of couriers. As fulltimers married and had children in the movement, these children were placed under the care of the household of either the mother's or the father's parents, or otherwise of other trusted households in the fulltimers' area of operation.

The household also served as a unit of camouflage and protection for revolutionary activists. Hacienda homes were used as "fronts" to shelter cadres, hold ideological seminars and local meetings, as well as meetings of revolutionary committees. Operating within and near hacienda homes allowed fulltimers to blend into daily routines of household activities whenever military patrols got near.

### *The ideological framing of household sacrifices for the movement*

To gain the initial, minimal forms of contributions from hacienda workers, NPA organizers appealed to the household interests of the workers and to their responsibilities as fathers and mothers. In informal talks and seminars, they highlighted the inability of the workers to provide a decent livelihood for their households and to secure a better future for their children which, they said, could only be remedied through organized action under the wings of the revolutionary movement. Thus, they touched a highly sensitive spot among married women and men: the status of married people within the local community, as well as their own sense of self-worth, was closely linked to their performance as parents. In a sense, the organizers appealed to villagers to be good mothers and fathers – according to established cultural notions – and to accept the necessary sacrifices that organization and collective action entailed. Married men were explicitly organized as fathers in a hacienda-based organization of "fathers," and married women in an organization of "mothers."

NPA organizers, then, sought to align workers' household interests with the interests of the movement. They partly succeeded in doing so: with the backing of the coercive powers of the movement, the workers were successful in gaining from the planter wage increases and the free use of a small part of hacienda-land for subsistence agriculture. As some workers expressed it: "the NPA will defend us when we have problems with the planter," and "without the NPA, we will lose our gains and the planter will become despotic again." Moreover, NPA activists tried to discipline drunkard, quarrelsome, or adulterous spouses, and pressured them, under threats of physical punishment, to act as responsible heads of households.

But the extra contributions requested from workers who became part-time or fulltime activists were no longer balanced by the concrete benefits to households mentioned above. Those benefits accrued to most worker households in the hacienda, regardless of whether they invested *extra* time and resources into the movement. This posed a problem for the movement organizers: they needed to motivate potential activists among the workers to



forsake the immediate interests of their household and their concrete responsibilities as household members.

Commitment to one's household or immediate family is, to a large extent, a product of socialization, an ideology that celebrates and reaffirms such commitment, and real relations of interdependency and interaction that tend to develop and confirm it. On these four fronts – ideology, socialization, real interdependencies, and regular interaction – the movement introduced alternatives that had the effect of weakening a household's claim on the loyalty of its members, and of shifting – to a varying extent – commitment from the household to the NPA.

NPA organizers introduced a new concept in the village, *personal enteres* (personal interests), a concept with a negative connotation that denoted placing one's personal and family interests before those of the movement and oppressed people at large. It stood in stark contrast to the glorified "service to the people." Together with other NPA-introduced terms like *burgis* (denoting the whole complex of bourgeois culture marked by family-based accumulation and power) and *pyudal* (referring to "feudal," authoritarian personal relations, including relations in the family), the concept was meant to erode that essential Filipino value: the centrality of family interests and loyalties. *Personal enteres* became a catchword among organizers and local activists.

These terms were introduced as part of a large-scale ideological offensive to inspire support for the movement. They fit into the Marxist analysis of society which organizers presented to the workers – an analysis that defined current conditions as unjust, identified the people and structures to blame, suggested that the aggrieved party could do something about it, and set out a path of action.<sup>3</sup> Numerous seminars, as well as songs, dances, and plays enacted by the movement's youth group in the hacienda, all stressed the need to sacrifice for the eventual liberation of "the oppressed people," and attached honor to such sacrifice. These new perceptions were activated and reproduced within new, NPA-dominated networks and organizations in the hacienda.

One of the largest sacrifices for a household – letting go of a son or daughter who wanted to serve the movement as a fulltime revolutionary – was handled delicately by NPA organizers. Strong parental opposition could turn into antagonism towards the movement. High-ranking NPA officials asked parents seriously and solemnly permission to take their child, focusing on the moral value of sacrifice. They took care to recast familial sacrifice and loss as contributions to future improvement of the family's life chances: they argued that the only way to give their children and grandchildren a truly brighter future (a prime cultural value) was to let their activist child join the movement as a fulltimer. Parents who asked about death benefits or allowances in case their child would perish, were told there would be none, but their child would be viewed as a hero, and the workers in the hacienda would stand by the bereaved family. Whatever the sentiments of the parents, they could not force their children to stay. Many youths left against their parents' wishes.

### *Dealing with costs: conflicts in the household*

---

3. On similar "collective action frames" intended to inspire action, see Gamson (1992: 7).

Apparently, workers of Milagros set the following limit to the costs of activism: the costs should not threaten the minimal daily subsistence of one's household. Thus, married workers whose households would hardly be able to survive in their absence, did not leave their homes to become fulltime revolutionaries (unless they had no choice), and neither did single youths who were the only ones living with, and caring for, their elderly parents.<sup>4</sup> In such cases, then, responsibility towards the household overruled all other loyalties.

The only married persons who left their households to join the movement as fulltimers were two men who had little choice: they were targeted by the military because of their part-time activist work for the movement, and ran a considerable risk of being killed if they would stay in the hacienda. Both discussed this decision with their families. As one recounted, "I asked permission from my wife and parents." They discussed how their households would survive in their absence, and solutions were sought in soliciting help from their extended families. Perhaps, these were the only cases in which activist sacrifices to the household were unequivocally supported by members of their households.

In the case of teenaged children or young single men and women who left home to join the movement fulltime, conditions were different. They were not targeted by the military; they chose to take this step, within the constraints of their activist peer-group, the influence of revolutionary ideology, the recruitment appeals of NPA organizers, and their past careers as part-time activists.

In doing so, many deviated considerably from the "living strategies" their parents had mapped for them. Some were high school students at the time they left home to become an underground cadre. Their parents and siblings had borne their schooling costs as an investment in a better future for the child itself and possibly its siblings, and those investments then came to naught. Others were workers in the canefields and were needed as income-earners, and possibly also as "investors" in the schooling of younger siblings. Besides these considerations, awareness of the physical risks to which their child would be exposed clashed with the parents' concerns for improving the life chances of their children.

But the relative weight of these considerations could vary among parents. Parents who were not actively involved in the NPA organizations in the hacienda, and who felt little affinity with the cause and ideology of the movement, resented their child's NPA career the most. Among those parents who were part-time activists in the hacienda and sympathized with their child's convictions, reactions ranged from refusal to consent with a heavy heart.

Part-time activists, who remained in the hacienda, were faced with a different set of problems in their households: they had busy schedules that impinged on their household duties. Such activists were, say, officials of the hacienda-based party-branch (a branch of the underground Communist Party of the Philippines), or of the organizing groups of women, men, and youth, or members of the committees on organization, education, finance, defence, and health care that were eventually established. Their activities involved holding seminars,

---

4. Ben Kerkvliet made a similar observation in his study of the "Huk" peasant guerrilla movement in the Philippine region of Central Luzon in the 1940s-50s: speaking of the time when the movement was fighting the Japanese occupation forces, he states, "villagers believed that every family should have at least one adult male to look after it; consequently many husbands and brothers did not feel free to join" the guerrilla army (Kerkvliet 1977: 68).

attending numerous meetings, writing progress reports, and managing the implementation of programs handed down by their superiors.

Wives complained that their activist husbands failed to do their share in feeding, clothing, and protecting their families. Husbands had similar complaints about their activist wives:

The husband of an organizer, not active in the movement himself, began to complain that his wife was helping other people elsewhere but failed to help the people in her own house: since she had cut back on her wage-work in the canefields, her children lacked money for uniforms and other schooling costs. She tried to solve the problem by laying out a commercial vegetable garden in her yard to be tended by her children, but her children were uncooperative and she ended up tending the vegetables herself in the few spare moments she had.

This was a general problem across the movement. “The more their responsibilities for the movement increased, the more they lacked time for their families,” said a former activist in the southern uplands; if they were to shoulder even more responsibilities, “their families would go hungry.”

The standard solution employed by the NPA was ideological and moral. Leaders of the “fathers” or “mothers” would explain to the duped spouses that their activist spouse was working for the *common* good and his or her sacrifices deserved full support. In fact, most activists preferred some form of conjugal activism, in which both spouses shared the same level of ideological “awareness” and were equally committed to the movement, though not always equally active. In such cases, spouses of activists tended to accept the latter’s obligations to the movement and took over some of their household tasks as well.

Meanwhile, as local activists began to identify with their new roles and responsibilities, their minds were more and more with the movement, the “struggle,” their new responsibilities, their superiors in the movement who regularly checked on their performance, and their activist network in the village that began to claim much of their time. In several cases, at least, their growing commitment to the movement and its cause tended to weaken their concern for their own households.

### *Dealing with costs: clashes between movement leaders and fulltime revolutionaries concerning family-attachments and obligations*

The movement expected complete commitment from its fulltime activists. To this effect, it sought to minimize competing attachments as much as possible: family visits were curtailed, and longing for loved ones was branded as “sentimentalism.” Courtship – the first step towards creating a new family of one’s own – was strictly regulated, allowed only between partners with an equal level of revolutionary awareness and commitment to the cause, and was expected to culminate in a Party marriage that placed commitment to the movement first. In this endeavor, the movement had a valuable asset: the image of the fulltimer as a model of selfless dedication to the interests of the poor and to the revolution. This image was very attractive to idealistic youths, and those who went fulltime were thoroughly socialized in this new identity, which linked self-sacrifice for the common good to a powerful

sense of self-worth. Though many fulltimers complained about the strict courtship rules, and many started illicit relations and were punished with demotion, these personal attachments did not clash with their commitment to the movement.

However, new familial responsibilities came into play as fulltimers married fellow-cadres in the movement and had children. The fulltimers were not allowed to form a household with their spouse and newborn. After all, “serving the people” was considered a fulltime job that left no room for a family life of one’s own. The spouses were often deployed in different areas, and had to leave their own children under the care of their parents or other trusted people, whom they were allowed to visit only once in a while. Nevertheless, the children’s existence activated parental attachments and a sense of parental obligations.

The interests of these activists, as fulltimers *and* parents, began to clash with those of the movement. They felt that the movement provided too little financial assistance for the upkeep of the children. The NPA even cut off the children’s allowances when the movement’s income (derived from “voluntary” taxes, extortion, and “confiscations”) declined. Several ex-fulltimers whom I was able to interview recounted that they experienced this as a form of disrespect for themselves as persons, and for their sacrifice for the movement. Moreover, as their children grew older, they became all the more painfully aware that they were unable to be good parents for their children and they blamed, to a varying extent, the movement’s leadership for it. (Rutten 1996b)

These problems of family subsistence and familial obligations formed one of the reasons for the *exit* of fulltime activists from the movement, often in combination, for instance, with illness or personal conflicts with superiors. This outflow of married fulltimers was a regionwide phenomenon and increased in scope as the demographic make-up of the body of fulltimers changed towards a larger percentage of married members. For the movement, the outflow became an acute problem when the inflow of new (mostly single) recruits declined – a decline that was due, in particular, to an intensification of counterinsurgency.

### *Networks and competing loyalties*

Besides the household/family, other networks and organizations may compete for the loyalty of individuals and may shape their interests and sense of obligations. We should view this as a dynamic process, related to people’s involvement in changing networks. Studies of collective action and social-movement participation have long focused on social ties that facilitate such action and disregarded “ties that are constraining involvement” (McAdam and Paulsen 1993: 642). Since “individuals are embedded in many relationships that may expose the individual to conflicting pressures,” we need to study the effects of these “multiple embeddings” on social activism (ibid: 640, 642). Take, for instance, the following case:

In the early 1980s, the household of the overseer of the hacienda that neighbors Hda. Milagros was riven by conflict over the issue of support for the revolutionary movement. The overseer was firmly locked into a patron-client tie with the planter. Feeling a deep personal loyalty towards her, he resisted any support for the “subversive” movement. His wife and daughter, however, got involved in the leftwing network of the local Catholic Church by means of their active membership

of a women's group and the Basic Christian Community (BCC), and they developed a sympathy for the broad leftwing movement which later focused on the NPA. The daughter became a BCC activist. Based on her experiences, discussions, and contacts with NPAs within this leftwing Church network, and her marriage to a radical Church activist, she eventually joined the NPA. This process involved intensive conflicts between father and daughter, but the father's opposition was defeated by the growing influence of the NPA in the community.

By the mid-1980s, NPA activists in Hda. Milagros had formed the organizing groups of women, men, and youth, and numerous NPA committees, that formed new networks that competed with the household for the individual's time, energy, and loyalty. That these community-based NPA organizations were not based on household clusters but on gender and generation, may have helped to weaken the activist workers' primary loyalty to their household.

The youth group of the NPA was the most successful in redirecting individual loyalties towards the NPA. It acted as a peer-group engaged in "cultural work," i.e., staging revolutionary plays and songs. Many hacienda youths were keen to join, and besides the camaraderie and excitement it offered, their involvement in the youth group increased their commitment to the movement's cause. Members of the youth group were groomed to become activists and eventually fulltime NPAs in total service to the movement; the activities of this group were partly intended to move the youths into a peer-group committed to the NPA. Some parents tried to prevent this from happening by refusing to allow their teenaged children to follow seminars or join the youth group, or by sending them to relatives in Manila when organizers put pressure on their children to join.

New instances of conflicting loyalties developed as the power balance in the area changed in favor of the Philippine army in the late 1980s-early 1990s. A former high-ranking NPA cadre from Milagros was captured by the army in 1988 and, disillusioned by the NPA leadership in the previous years, he began to support the army in its campaign to convince workers to renounce their support for the NPA. In his *anti-NPA* activism in the area – which consisted primarily of ideological work (seminars), helping NPA cadres to exit safely from the movement, and convincing workers to avail of the government services that were offered as part of the counterinsurgency campaign – he could draw on the deep concern of parents to see their NPA-activist children return safely home. He also tried to recruit his nieces and nephews from Milagros into a youth group that staged anti-NPA songs and skits at public gatherings in the area. These girls and boys – too young to have experienced the NPA cultural group that was active in the hacienda before – thought it fun and earned an allowance besides. But these teenagers were still embedded in a community-based network of the NPA, with several adult women and men of Milagros (some of whom were their relatives) retaining their positions as local NPA activists. These activists noted with concern that the youths were being "brainwashed" by the military and eventually stopped their participation.

What makes these social ties relevant, then, is whether they foster identification with people or communities other than the household, and thus affect the individuals' perceptions of the obligations and responsibilities they have towards others.

### *Defining social activism as a feasible and expedient option*

Whether workers define social activism as a feasible and favorable option certainly affects their decision to engage in collective action. Workers of Hda. Milagros considered collective action rather “subversive” in the early 1970s, then gradually viewed it as acceptable, and downright respectable in the 1980s when the hacienda was under NPA control. This shift in workers’ perception of collective action was not only related to better opportunities and better chances of success. It was also related to the ways in which influential people or institutions defined workers’ collective action, and broadcast this image for public consumption.

In the early 1970s, worker activism was not part of the accepted action-repertoire of the workers of Milagros. Collective action ran counter to the ideology of patron-clientage that still permeated the hacienda community, and the personal dependence on the planter made it extremely risky. Moreover, the government, in these first years of martial law, easily condemned independent collective action as “subversive.” Besides, workers of Milagros were hardly familiar with this strategy at the time, and lacked a social-movement organization that could provide support. But by the mid-1970s, many workers started to consider collective action an acceptable option. Progressive Catholic clergy played an important role in this respect: they not only helped to develop a union, but also presented an ideology that defined collective action as a positive, necessary, and honorable living strategy, and spread this message by means of seminars, songs, sermons, and religious plays. Their image of collective action as a *viable* strategy was, however, somewhat muddled by initial planter repression.

In the 1980s, social activism became a respectable and more or less “official” activity in the hacienda, supported by a widely disseminated Marxist ideology that attached positive value to collective protests: the revolutionary movement successfully backed up the collective actions of workers and made this strategy increasingly viable and rewarding, and eventually the NPA more or less imposed on workers a program of regular organization and mobilization. At the same time, those workers who came into conflict with NPA activists and who experienced the more repressive side of the movement, began to perceive their expected participation in the numerous meetings, collective protests, and rallies rather as a duty performed for the NPA than as a valuable strategy to improve their own and their household’s life chances. They participated, they said, primarily to avoid being suspected as an unwilling supporter of the movement. Some began to tag these forms of collective action, again, as “subversive.”

What are perceived as feasible and desirable living practices, then, can change over time. Such perceptions can also vary among people in the same community, and in the same household, as the following case of a worker household of Milagros illustrates:

Husband and wife were both local part-time activists for the NPA. But for their children they wished another career: the standard model-trajectory of a high school education and then a job in the city. Things turned out differently. One daughter dropped out of school to become a fulltime NPA against her parents’ wishes. Another became a youth organizer, then was offered an opportunity to become a housemaid in Hong Kong, through a relative, but refused in order to stay with her activist boyfriend in Hda. Milagros. Her parents were heartbroken that she let this golden opportunity pass by – an opportunity to earn a substantial salary that could have helped to uplift the entire household. Meanwhile, a son who had been a guerrilla fighter for some time, skilled in the art of planning ambushes, left the movement and settled in Manila, where he joined a group of men who staged

occasional hold-ups when they were in need of money for drinking sprees. His parents were very disconcerted that he used his revolutionary training for such purposes.

The tensions and conflicts within this household, then, revealed considerable differences in what household members considered acceptable and desirable options for themselves and others.

### *Conclusion: The household as a moving target of analysis*

The preceding notes suggest some ways of analyzing the link between the household, household interests, and high-cost activism. They leave room for (1) possible disunity and conflicting interests within the household; (2) changes across time in people's loyalties and commitment towards others, within and outside their households; and (3) changes in people's perceptions of expedient living strategies. Instead of assuming that people are motivated by one fixed set of single-group interests, this perspective considers the changing, multiple networks in which people are embedded, and the multiple sets of "interests" that these social relations may foster.

In this light, it is useful to consider the household as a "moving target of analysis" (White 1980: 21). Though White uses the term to refer to shifts in "composition, structure, overall productive capability, and consumption requirements" of households (ibid.), I would place particular emphasis here on changes in the attachments and perceptions of household members.

As we have seen, mobilization by a social movement is one way in which the obligations that people feel, and the living practices they value, may change. Moreover, when we look at individual household members as involved in changing social networks (of which the household is but one), we can better grasp the ways in which these various social ties compete for the loyalty of these individuals, and how new social ties may reshape their interests and commitments – away from the immediate interests of their household. Awareness of these processes can help explain why workers engage in high-cost activism when the benefits to their households appear small and uncertain.

Participation in a social movement and involvement in activism, moreover, should be viewed as processes as well. Such participation is not based on a single decision to opt for that "strategy." Rather, it is "a processual, even stage-like or step-wise, phenomenon," in which "decisions to participate over time are . . . subject to frequent reassessment and renegotiation," within changing contexts and networks (Snow et al. 1986: 466-467). The history of collective action among workers of Hda. Milagros suggests that the prolonged interaction between the workers and the revolutionary movement NPA gradually reshaped relevant networks, loyalties, and perceptions among a considerable number of workers in such a way that they tended to dispose these workers favorably towards high-cost activism.

## References

- Adas, Michael. 1981. "From Avoidance to Confrontation: Peasant Protest in Precolonial and Colonial Southeast Asia", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23: 217-47.
- Aguilar, Jr. Filomeno V. 1994. "Sugar Planter-State Relations and Labor Processes in Colonial Philippine Haciendas." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 22: 50-80.
- Aya, Rod. 1990. *Rethinking Revolutions and Collective Violence: Studies on Concept, Theory and Method*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- Calhoun, Craig. 1991. "The Problem of Identity in Collective Action." In: Joan Huber, ed., *Macro-Micro Linkages in Sociology*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Collins, Jane. 1986. "The Household and Relations of Production in Southern Peru", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28: 651-71.
- Cornfield, Daniel B., Hilquias B. Cavalcanti Filho, Bang Jee Chun. 1990. "Household, Work, and Labor Activism: Gender Differences in the Determinants of Union Membership Participation", *Work and Occupations* 17: 131-51.
- Coronel, Miguel G. 1991. *Pro-Democracy People's War*. Quezon City: Vanmarc Ventures.
- Coser, Lewis A. 1974. *Greedy Institutions: Patterns of Undivided Commitment*. New York: The Free Press.
- Gamson, William A. 1992. *Talking Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodwin, Jeff. 1997. "The Libidinal Constitution of a High-Risk Social Movement: Affectual Ties and Solidarity in the Huk Rebellion, 1946 to 1954", *American Sociological Review* 62: 53-69.
- Gould, Roger V. 1991. "Multiple Networks and Mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871", *American Sociological Review* 56: 716-29.
- Hechter, Michael. 1990. "The Attainment of Solidarity in Intentional Communities", *Rationality and Society* 2: 142-55.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. 1973/74. "Peasants and Politics", *Journal of Peasant Studies* 1: 3-23.
- Jones, Gregg R. 1989. *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Kerkvliet, Benedict J. 1977. *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kruger, Norma J. 1992. *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Larkin, John A. 1993. *Sugar and the Origins of Modern Philippine Society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Mahmood, Cynthia Keppley. 1996. *Fighting for Faith and Nation: Dialogues with Sikh Militants*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- McAdam, Doug. 1986. "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer", *American Journal of Sociology* 92:64-90.
- McAdam, Doug and Ronnelle Paulsen. 1993. "Specifying the Relationship between Social Ties and Activism", *American Journal of Sociology* 99: 640-667.
- McCarthy, John D. 1996. "Constraints and Opportunities in Adopting, Adapting, and Inventing." In: Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Berkeley: Cambridge University Press.



- McCoy, Alfred W. 1991. "The Restoration of Planter Power in La Carlota City." In: Benedict J. Kerkvliet and Resil B. Mojares, eds., *From Marcos to Aquino: Local Perspectives on Political Transition in the Philippines*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Migdal, Joel S. 1974. *Peasants, Politics, and Revolution: Pressures Toward Political and Social Change in the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nicdao, Leonardo S. n.d. "History of the Establishment of the CPP/NPA in Negros Occidental." Typescript.
- O'Brien, Niall. 1993. *Island of Tears, Island of Hope: Living the Gospel in a Revolutionary Situation*. New York: Orbis Books, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Popkin, Samuel. 1988. "Political Entrepreneurs and Peasant Movements in Vietnam." In Michael Taylor, ed., *Rationality and Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Race, Jeffrey. 1972. *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Runes, T. 1939. *General Standards of Living and Wages of Workers in the Philippine Sugar Industry*. Philippine Council, Institute of Pacific Relations.
- Rutten, Rosanne. 1982. *Women Workers of Hacienda Milagros: Wage Labor and Household Subsistence on a Philippine Sugarcane Plantation*. Publikatieserie Zuid- en Zuidoost-Azie, no. 30. Amsterdam: Antropologisch-Sociologisch Centrum, Universiteit van Amsterdam.
- —. 1991. "Class and Kin: Conflicting Loyalties on a Philippine Hacienda." In Frans Husken and Jeremy Kemp, eds., *Cognition and Social Organization in Southeast Asia*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- —. 1996a. "Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA: Experiences in a Hacienda in Negros Occidental, 1978-1995." In: Patricio N. Abinales, ed., *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.
- —. 1996b. Family and Revolution: The Family as a Locus of Mobilization by the CPP-NPA in Rural Negros Occidental. Paper presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Philippine Studies Conference, April 14-16 1996, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Schmink, Marianne. 1984. "Household Economic Strategies: Review and Research Agenda", *Latin American Research Review* 19: 87-101.
- Scott, James C. 1976. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Snow, David A., Louis A. Zurcher, Jr., and Sheldon Ekland-Olson. 1980. "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment", *American Sociological Review* 45: 787-801.
- Snow, David A., et al. 1986. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation", *American Sociological Review* 51: 464-481.
- Tilly, Charles. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Van der Linden, Marcel. 1993. "Connecting Household History and Labour History", *International Review of Social History* 38: 163-73.
- Waterbury, Ronald. 1975. "Non-revolutionary Peasants: Oaxaca Compared to Morelos in the Mexican Revolution", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17: 410-42.
- White, Benjamin N.F. 1980. "Rural Household Studies in Anthropological Perspective." In: Hans P. Binswanger et al. (eds.), *Rural Household Studies in Asia*. Singapore:

- Singapore University Press.
- Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. 1991. *Exploring Revolution: Essays on Latin American Insurgency and Revolutionary Theory*. Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Wolf, Diane L. 1990. "Daughters, Decisions and Domination: An Empirical and Conceptual Critique of Household Strategies", *Development and Change* 21: 43-74.
- Zulaika, Joseba. 1988. *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.