WHY DID YOU LEAVE?

A Life History Approach to Filipino Activists' Disengagement from the

Philippine National Democratic Movement Organizations

in the Netherlands

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Abstract

Using Olivier Fillieule's career activist approach and life history method, this study explored the disengagement process of four Filipino activists from their National Democratic-oriented organizations in the Netherlands. Traversing through their life in the struggle trajectories of *joining, persisting* and *leaving*, changes in their behaviour, perspectives and choices unfold revealing a diversity of reasons for their movement participation. It appeared that while they shared similar reasons for persisting (i.e. commitment and continued participation) over time, their reasons for joining were not the same as their reasons for leaving, which illustrated the complexity of the process and the determinants. Their involvement in activism was due to their *religious background, lives of Missionary doctors, family of Communists, Marxism and other Philosophical readings, class background* and *friends.* Then, they persisted in the organization through their *political education, positive experiences in marginalized communities, strikes and demonstrations, belief in radical changes, positive experiences in doing political work,* and also due to *Martial Law*. However, they left their movement organization for emotionally-related reasons such as *exhaustion due to political work, lack of personal growth and time for oneself in the organization, frustration, disappointment, disillusionment, fear and scepticism, family concerns and guilty feelings.*

Key words: *engagement, persistence, disengagement, life history, career approach, movement participation trajectory*

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Contents

Chapter 1   Introduction

Activism of various forms and kinds has long been practiced throughout human history (Goodwin and Jasper 2003). An organized and collective form of activism toward a common socio-political goal is what we can expect from a social movement and its organization. Many social movements, which are "conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means" (Goodwin and Jasper 2003, 4), have a long-lasting characteristic as they "last longer than a single protest or riot" (ibid). As such, they "represent a continuous *process* of generation to decline rather than a discrete series of developmental stages" (McAdam 1982, 36 quoted in White 2010, 341), which illustrates a trajectory of individual participation over time characterized by *joining, maintaining* and *leaving* (Klandermans 1997; Fillieule 2010).

One of the key components of every social movement's stability and longevity is its activists who join, stay involved and committed over time. If an activist stops or leaves a *Social Movement Organization (SMO)*, while he or she may not entirely paralyze it, it will certainly have an effect on its day-to-day operation especially if it relies on self-supporting full-time activists. Moreover, in cases where large number of activists leaves an *SMO*, it certainly contributes to its decline and eventual demise if it does not recover from membership loss. If this happens, it basically defeats the purpose of the *SMO* (and the movement where it is part of) to grow and forward its objectives of collectively affect social change. This shows that retaining activists are important for social movements to achieve its goals and succeed over time. In

studying movement participation, it is, thus, important to study why they persist

and leave, and not stop at why they join. It is from this observation and from my

own experiences concerning fellow activists who left our organization when I was

still a full-time activist in the Philippines some years back that I explore the case of

activists' disengagement from the Philippine National Democratic (ND) Movement

organizations. Before presenting my puzzle, we first take a look at the current state

of research on activist disengagement from social movements.

I.   Disengagement from Social Movements: What do we know so far?

While literature on political participation and social movements abounds, studies on

social movement participation over time, that is, *a trajectory of engaging, committing*

and *disengaging*, remain understudied (Passy and Giugni 2000; Klandermans 2003;

van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013; Fillieule 2010, *my italics*). Some factors

explaining this include fewer studies on activism from microsociological

perspectives compared to organizations, dismissal of rational choice theory in favour

of collective action theory to explain movement participation, and insufficient

available resources (Fillieule 2010). With regards to the third factor, researchers

interested in activist disengagement are confronted with the practical problems of no

longer existing respondents or participants at the time of study and inaccessible list

of membership files, if there are any at all (ibid). In addition to this, living (former)

activists, especially those who were members of clandestine revolutionary

organizations also pose a challenge, as they might not want to expose themselves for

confidentiality and security reasons. Another practical difficulty is the need for longitudinal studies (Klandermans 2003), which help them to move "from snapshots of reality to a processual perspective" (Fillieule 2001 quoted in Fillieule 2010, 1).

Moving on, the topic of activist disengagement is studied in relation to the activist involvement and persistence (i.e. sustained participation and commitment) in the organization over time. In fact, it is through studying involvement that scholars have been able to address the topic of persistence and disengagement in which they are able to identify their determinants.

For instance, looking at the membership dropout from the Swedish temperance organization, Sandell (1999) claims that people's decision to join and leave depends on positive or negative *interpersonal influences* (14). Conversely, while Klandermans (1986, 1997, 2003) points to *insufficient gratification* and *lack of commitment* as exit factors in labour and peace movements, Passy and Giugni (2000) look at the *absence of link between life sphere and political sphere* and *lack of social network embeddedness* to explain sustained participation and disengagement of Swiss solidarity movement activists. Additionally, White (2010) argues that *family history of involvement* is a determining factor for an Irish Republican Movement activist's persistence. However, as they experience *changes in the personal lives,* it leads to their disengagement.

With regards to other factors of disengagement, Amjahad and Viera (2010) identify *ideology* and *position of the organization in the political offer*. One of the reasons commonly given when one leaves activism or a social movement is ideology. They

argue, however, that while "various studies and testimonies often insisted on the ideological dissensions, disillusions and a certain disenchantment to explain the exit…an ideological distance with the orientation of the organisation cannot be the only explanation to the exit"(12). In terms of the position in the organization in the political offer, this refers to the organizations joining political parties and losing their position. Concretely, the examples given by Amjahad and Viera were that of the French Communist and Socialist parties, which when they entered the political arena and were winning, they were enjoying their leading positions but when they were losing, members then disaffiliated (13).

As presented above, these studies on activists' long-term movement participation show the diversity of factors explaining disengagement. At the same time by reconstructing one's participation trajectory, it shows that "leaving – like joining – is a process which is controlled by a complex set of determinants" (Klandermans 2003, 117). Moreover, these determinants also vary per social movement organization. As this is the case, and as the body of knowledge on activist disengagement is still relatively small (Corrigall – Brown 2012), it is therefore worthy to conduct more study on the topic to better understand the phenomenon and see whether these existing determinants are recognizable in other social movements and its activists. In this context lies the theoretical significance of my research puzzle.

II.   Significance, Objectives and Research Puzzle

This paper explores the disengagement of four Filipino activists from their

organizations in the Netherlands within the *National Democratic (ND)* movement or

the *Philippine Left*. Emerging from the 1960s social unrest, the *ND* movement is both

a political and revolutionary movement in the Philippines composed of various

(grassroots-based, sectoral and transnational) alliances, organizations and groups. It

carries *national democracy* as its political orientation, where it struggles – both in legal

and armed means – to claim national sovereignty from indirect colonization of the

United States and genuine democracy for all Filipinos by implementing

comprehensive agrarian reform and national industrialization as well as upholding

the democratic rights of the broad masses of people. It also has affiliated and allied

organizations of Filipinos and solidarity networks abroad[1]. Also, as the ND

movement is a high-risk/high-cost movement as it is tagged and targeted as an

enemy of the state[2].

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[1] Since there is no single working (conceptual) definition of this term (yet) from academic sources, I made this description from the explanations given in the book, *The Philippine Society and Revolution* by Amado Guerrero (USA: International Association of Filipino Patriots, 1979), in the article, "The National Democratic Movement and The Political Activist: Speech delivered before the Third Annual Conference of the National Students' League, at Iloilo City Colleges, Iloilo City on December 26, 1966" by Jose Maria Sison (Anakbayan UPLB blog, https://anakbayanuplb.wordpress.com/2011/07/20/the-national-democratic-movement-and-the-political-activist/, and to the websites of national democratic (mass) organizations such as Bayan (http://www.bayan.ph/what-is-bayan/), Anakbayan (http://www.anakbayan.org/about) and on the about page of National Democratic Front of the Philippines (http://www.ndfp.net/web2014/index.php/about).

[2] The National Democratic movement and its leaders are considered by the Philippine government and the military as "the enemy/enemies of the state", while its armed component – the *Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army* is listed since 2002 as one of the foreign terrorist organizations by the US Department of State, (Bureau of Counterterrorism. 2014. "Chapter 6: Foreign Terrorist Organization", Country Reports on Terrorism 2014. U.S. Department of State Publication. June 2015. Pdf. URL: http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239413.htm) and by European Union,

A.   Empirical Significance

Being one of the longest running national liberation movements in Asia[3], the ND

movement has persisted through different regimes' repressive attacks, led two

People Powers and succeeded over its own major break-up or *split* in the 1990s[4].

However, even though it has persisted over time, like many other movements, it is

not devoid of members, including long-term dedicated and committed activists, who

left and defected in the case of some guerrilla members. Moreover, the event of split

has affected not only many individuals, whom most left for *reasons ideologically-*

related, but also the movement itself as it did not only lose its membership but also its

organizations.

As presented in the beginning, studying why activists' leave is equally

important as to why they join, especially for movements, like the ND movement,

which have little resources and mainly rely on committed activists. Furthermore, it

takes a painstaking amount of time and effort both for individuals and movements

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(Official Journal of the European Union. 2013. "Decisions: Council Decision 2013/395/CFSP". PDF. URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/documents/news/20130726_1_en.pdf)

[3] BAYAN USA. 2014. **"**TAKE ACTION Against Obama's Visit to Japan, South Korea, the Philippines & Malaysia!**"** http://bayanusa.org/take-action-against-obamas-visit-to-japan-south-korea-the-philippines-malaysia/; Roel Landingin. 2011. "Talks begin to end 40-year Philippine insurgency" *Financial Times Asia Pacific.* February 15. http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/79d95e54-1314-11e0-a367-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3hijwOefY

[4] The split caused the division among leaders, members and supporters of the ND movement between those who rejected and reaffirmed the political and ideological line and principles of the movement. Afterwards, the Communist Party launched a campaign to rectify the errors of the split, called *The Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM).* For general overview of historical background and contexts, see Miriam Ferrer's "Communist Insurgency in the Philippines" in *A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Andrew T. H. Tan (UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited); for SGRM documents, see the Communist Party of the Philippines website: http://www.philippinerevolution.net/documents#doc3

to dedicate one's life to a high-risk cause. Therefore, even though, studying just four

participants is not representative of the experiences of all those who have left, it can

give a general sense of which determinants are identifiable in this particular

movement, which can help anticipate and avoid the factors that may cause their

departure, and hence retain their commitment and participation over time.

B.   *Theoretical Significance*

As already mentioned, the theoretical significance of this research is that this study

contributes to the enrichment of literature on disengagement in particular, and on

social movement participation in general. Moreover, specifically for those interested

in the Philippine social movements, this research adds new information, as there has

not yet been any study done on Filipino activist's disengagement from the ND

movement[5].

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[5] To support this claim, I checked Google Scholar as well as online journals of Philippine universities (where I was only able to access two – University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University) using "Filipino activist disengagement and the ND movement", but it yielded no results. With the two Philippine journals online, I also tried the following search strings: "disengagement"; "demobilization"; "ND activists" and "national democratic movement". The UP journal (http://journals.upd.edu.ph/) gave me the following results: 0 for the first two while 9 and 12 for the last two, yet still not particularly related to or about my topic. As for the Ateneo journal http://journals.ateneo.edu/), except for "ND activists" (6) and "disengagement" (1) that is unrelated to my topic, the rest is zero.

C.   Objectives and Research Puzzle

In line with the social research goals of identifying patterns and exploring diversity (Ragin 1994), this research aims to identify the reasons of disengagement from the Philippine ND movement to contribute to the diversity of factors or reasons for activist disengagement as well as to the general knowledge on disengagement from social movements. Additionally, as the stories of Filipino ND activists' disengagement do not figure in social movement studies, this research also aims to tell their stories or 'give voice' to them (ibid).

Finally, in order to explore and understand the factors of disengagement and conditions of involvement and persistence of Filipino ND activists, this research paper therefore asks, *"Why have long-term committed Filipino activists disengaged from their national democratic-oriented organization in the Netherlands?"*

III.   Definition of Key Concepts and the 'Activist Career' Approach to Disengagement

   A.   Key Concepts

As activism or movement participation occurs in successive phases characterized by *joining*, *maintaining* and *leaving* (Klandermans 1997; Fillieule 2010), I view *disengagement* as a process occurring across one's life trajectory of *involvement* and *persistence*.

   In simple terms, *engagement* is meant here as joining and participating while *persistence* is committing and sustaining participation in a social movement organization over time. In turn, *disengagement* is when one permanently stops their participation in and leaves the organization. Other concepts related that are used are *withdrawal* and *exit,* which also expresses leaving the organization. Another related term is *defection,* which is used by social movement scholars such as Klandermans and Fillieule to explain disengagement.

   Other key concepts here include *activism* and *commitment.* *Activism*, being a broad concept that pertains to one's participation – directly or indirectly – in various forms of actions directed at the achievement of political and social goals, I use it here mainly in relation to *collective action* expressed in formally joining social movement organizations. At the same time, I adapt McAdam's (1989) definition of activism expressing persistence in movements:

> Activism broadens the base of activist's link to movement organizations and other activists. In turn, these links make it more likely that the activist will be drawn into subsequent activist episode, thereby deepening his or her

commitment to activist values and perpetuating the process of personal change that initial forays into activism have set into motion (754 quoted in Klandermans 1997, 111).

Lastly, connected to this is the concept of *commitment,* which refers to "durable participation in some collective action aimed at defending or promoting a cause" (Sawicki and Siméant 2010: e83).

B. *'Activist Career Approach' to Disengagement from social movements*

To explore disengagement of Filipino activists from the ND organization, I use Olivier Fillieule's (2010) *'activist career'* approach because he proposes to study disengagement through one's life trajectory in order to understand it. Also, with this approach, Fillieule offers conceptual tools that allow us "to combine questions of the predisposition to and operationalization of activism, of differentiated and variable forms of engagement over time, of the multiplicity of engagements across the life cycle, and of the withdrawal and extension of commitment" (11).

This approach adapts Everett Hughes and Howard Becker's interactionist concept of career, which "casts the stages of access to and exercise of profession as a series of objective changes of position and an associated series of subjective upheavals" (Fillieule 2010, 4). Moreover, with this concept, disengagement can be retraced in sequences.

Using this concept to study activist disengagement "allows us to focus on the process and permanent dialectic between individual history, social institutions, and

more generally, context" (ibid). This means that this approach views disengagement as a process and not a mere discrete event.

At the same time, not only is disengagement situated within one's life trajectory of participation looking for patterns of changes in behaviour and perspectives of activists from involvement to sustained participation that might explain his or her disengagement, but also the role of social institutions or organizations and other circumstances are taken into account (ibid). Therefore, this approach allows both the uncovering of subjective (individual) and objective (structure) determinants of disengagement.

Having defined my key concepts and presented my approach, I will also address two more research questions to supplement my main research puzzle, namely:

(1) Why and how they did they get involve in the ND movement?

(2) Why have they and what sustained their participation over time?

In the following methodology section, I will discuss how I have addressed my main and sub-questions.

IV.   Methodology: Life History Approach

A.   Why this approach?

To explore Filipino ND activists' disengagement, I used *life history* approach because it works well with *'activist career'* approach that sees disengagement as a process and places it across one's life trajectory. Moreover, *life history approach* allows this research to determine changes in participants' behaviour, choices and perspectives from their point of view, how they experience and define their participation in relation to others at a given context. As Fusch-Ebaugh (1988) puts it, "Life histories seek to establish the process whereby personal circumstances are interpreted by the person giving the account so as to produce the actions related in the account" (32). She further adds, "Particular attention is given to the temporal sequences of events, the social context in which they occurred, their interpretations by the individual, and how all this led him or her to believe and behave as he or she did" (Schwartz and Jacobs 1979 cited in Fusch – Ebaugh 1998, 32).

Another motivation to use this approach is its applicability to a single case or participant. As life history is about studying "the subjective experience of individuals and their construction of the social world" (Jones 1983, 147 quoted in Marshall and Rossman 2011, 151), it is more concerned with "depth over breadth, and [as] the aim in participant selection is not population representativeness" (Cole and Knowles 2001, 67), it allows me to explore the topic of disengagement with a limited sample size or number of participants.

     B.   Life History and Life Story: Definitions

The term *life history* is usually used interchangeably with *life story* (Bertaux 1981) along with other terms such as *autobiography/biography*, *personal documents* and *oral history*, particularly in biographical research (Roberts 2002). In brief, according to della Porta (1998), autobiography and biography are both "collected from oral or written sources and analysed through qualitative and quantitative techniques" (168). Likewise, personal documents refer to materials "which express the point of view of participants on their own experience" (Angell 1945 cited in della Porta 1992, 168). Lastly, while life history and oral history are similar, Curtis and Curtis (2011) distinguish the two in terms of methodological approaches. They stress that oral history centres on recalling events, role of memory and relies solely on the interview process, developing a biography or fragments of it and it is atheoretical (61). In contrast, life history focuses on entire life chronology, it uses triangulation, contextualises and theorises biography, and uses social theory as well as analytical induction (ibid).

     To clarify, both terminologies – *life history* and *life story* – are consciously used in this paper as approach and as a story or data, respectively. With that in mind, this paper uses Curtis and Curtis' (2011) definition of *life history* as "an approach that collects and analyses data sourced from semi-structured interviews with an individual about their biography" (56). Likewise, it treats *life story* as:

> The story of a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know it, usually as a result of a guided interview by

> another…A life story is a fairly complete narrating of one's entire experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects (Atkinson 1998 quoted in Roberts 2002, 3)

Moreover, it has to be noted that while some define life history as a method that includes sources of data to supplement one's life story (e.g. Robertson 2002; Bertaux 1981), and some refer to life history as life stories generated through written/text documents and other methods engaging interaction such as oral histories or autobiography to create one's life history (Bertaux and Thompson 2009; Chase 2005), this research draws from Curtis and Curtis' (2011) version of life history approach that uses *semi-structured interviews* and *triangulation*.

While triangulation originally means using "more than one method to double- or cross-check the collected and/or partially analysed data from another method" (70), they stress that in life history research, though triangulation is a necessary part, it should not be used "to 'check up on the interview data' as it 'is considered authentic" (ibid). Rather, triangulation (i.e. non-interview based sources) is used to help with memory and recall issues and to conduct properly informed interviews (ibid).

C. *Method: Collecting Stories*

1. Life Stories from semi-structured interviews

I collected my data by conducting semi-structured (or in-depth) interviews. All of the interviews were recorded. As for my interview guide, I prepared a list of topics based on my (sensitized) key concepts in the form of questions grouped under my

main puzzle and sub-questions for my participants. During the actual interviews, as this technique is flexible (Boyce and Neale 2006) and open to probing and elaboration (Boeije 2013), I was able to adjust my topic list and ask more questions on the spot. As a result, I was able to gather 'rich' or 'thick' data with detailed descriptions (Curtis and Curtis 2011) from a total of 5 interviews[6]

While other data collection techniques are also used in life history approach in combination with interviews such as participant observation and focus group, the topic of this research and available participants only allowed for semi-structured interview because there is no possibility to observe them leaving the movement since this happened in the past. Moreover, as the participants left their organizations around 15 years ago, their stories were told in retrospect, which inevitably entailed memory and recall issues, though most were events-related. For instance, one participant had difficulties with time reference and topic of discussions while two participants admitted having problems with recalling events because of their age. To address this, I triangulated some historical events by checking information online, and some I was able to triangulate upon transcribing the participant's stories.

With regards to data analysis, I used *coding* (Boeije 2013) to make sense of all the data I have collected and created themes out of them, which corresponded to my three questions. Classified under the general themes of *engagement, persistence* and *disengagement* are the various factors and reasons why they joined, persisted and left

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[6] Two participants were interviewed for 2 hours, one participant for 3 hours and one participant for 5.5 hours.

their organization. Due to the limited time availability of my participants, I first gathered the data by interviewing one participant after the other. Then, the transcription and coding analysis processes happened after all the interviews were done. Unfortunately, due to the thesis tasks ahead of me, and to the limited time availability this time on both sides – me and the participants, I was not able to conduct a follow-up interview, which if I did, it would have made my data richer.

Lastly, the interviews were conducted in Filipino. It helped facilitate better communication and understanding between me and the participants as this was our lingua franca. Also in this way, the participants would be relaxed and more open to tell their stories, which in turn, would yield better data. Then, for the purpose of this paper, I translated the data into English. My fluency in both languages ensures the reliability of the translation.

2.   Participants

In the beginning stage of this research, I planned to include all (former) Filipino activists in Europe for a wider scope. I set my criteria to Europe-based former political activist(s) who are no longer politically active but used to be long-term activists and committed in (one of) the ND organization/organizing work either in the Philippines or in Europe, including former members of the New People's Army (NPA). Another criterion was the exclusion of the so-called 'contras'. They used to be part of the ND movement but they broke away in the 1990s when they rejected the principles and program of the movement bringing with them some organizations

and networks that used to be with the movement. I excluded them because they are quite hostile to ND activists.

To know and gain access to other possible participants, I utilized my network of activists. From their response, I gathered at least ten, who were either former ND activists or former members of New People's Army (NPA) that are now based in the Netherlands and other parts of Europe, in addition to the seven (former) ND activists in the Netherlands that I personally know.

In the process, I eliminated in my list of target participants those who are outside of the Netherlands because the key person who would connect me to most them was not able to provide me information as early as possible. Also, in terms of manageability and feasibility, including those in other parts of Europe proved to be difficult as time went by, thus I decided to narrow it down to those in the Netherlands.

From the remaining twelve in the list, six people responded positively while two begged-off (eventually became three as one from the six also begged-off) and the rest did not reply. Among those who begged-off, two persons gave interesting responses. The first person used to be politically active in one of the organizations within the ND movement in the 1990s. In his reply, it seemed to me that he was relating my request to a negative experience that he had had in the past with fellow activists, hence his refusal. He wrote (in Filipino via email), "*you better interview*

someone else…I will explain [things] at the right time if you got doubts…I accept it/sorry')[7].

Though I did not pursue him anymore to become one of my participants, I still sent a reply clarifying my role as a researcher, that my project was conducted independently and that I did not know what he meant. The second person was a frequent face in various demonstrations and activities as a member of an ND youth organization also in the 1990s. Interestingly, she also seemed to have had negative experiences. She told me in Filipino, "*Oh, please, spare me! Old things would just come out. I might just tell nasty things*"[8].

These occasions illustrate that while finding [and contacting] an activist to be interviewed can be challenging (della Porta 1992), there are also issues of willingness. The refusal of the two to be interviewed can be traced to their 'negative' experiences that they are not willing to share to me most likely because we know each other and they know that I am still politically active. This seems to be the 'downside' and the inevitable dilemma of activist-researchers when doing life history research in social movement activists. Moreover, this can also be related to the factors mentioned in the introduction about the scarcity of available participants.

Moving on, in the end, I was able to collect data from five participants. However, I decided to exclude one participant's story in the data analysis because it turned out that though her story was very interesting, she did not meet my inclusion criteria, one of which is being a long-term activist. This weakness is all mine. Because

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[7] Email correspondence dated 16 April 2015.
[8] Personal encounter on 30 May 2015.

I became too enthusiastic with her story during our initial conversations (before the actual interview), I failed not only to stick with my criteria, but also to be clear with it.

Who ended up as my participants? As mentioned already in the beginning of this paper, this study tells the life stories of four Filipinos (former) ND activists in the Netherlands. They used to be fully engaged and committed in the organizations within the National Democratic Movement in the Philippines, but eventually decided to leave their movement organizations. Before coming to the Netherlands, they were long-term committed and experienced ND activists.

In the Philippines, they became involved in ND organizations in various ways and means. In the process of their political awakening and experiences in marginalized communities, they became seriously committed to '*Serve the People'*. Inspired by Mao Tse-Tung's political slogan *Serve the People,* the ND movement uses this same slogan as one of its core principles and calls urging the Filipinos, especially the petty-bourgeoisie, to be of service to the many and not just to oneself by linking up with the masses (workers and peasants) and advance the rights of all the oppressed.

One became a full-time activist in a health institution while another one, a former teacher, went back to teaching to do organizing work. Then, another one accepted a deployment abroad while the other one went underground. In the Netherlands, they continued their political work in organizations affiliated with the ND movement, but due to various circumstances and reasons, they left their

organizations.

      3.   My role as interviewer

As an interviewer, it was a challenging role being an active ND activist and a researcher at the same time. For instance, when participants talked about matters pertaining to the ND movement and social issues, I tended to react as an activist and not as a researcher. I dealt with this in two ways. If I noticed it during interviews, I corrected myself immediately. Then, I also made notes of it to avoid doing it in the next interview. Another challenging aspect was the moment when a participant got emotional. What I did was stop the interview and I asked him if it was still okay to move on.

When it comes to participant – activist relationship or rapport, already before this research, I have been in a good relationship with the participants as we personally know each other, and they know that I am an activist. At first, I was a bit anxious how to distance myself as an activist, researcher and acquaintance at the same time. Yet, in the process, except for my tendencies to react on activist-related matters, it appeared to be not a problem at all.

Moreover, being an activist and an acquaintance put me in a privilege position because not only they allowed me to access their life stories but they also entrusted me sensitive information. Furthermore, there was also a good interaction between us during the actual interviews. They were relaxed, open and communicative. Most of the time, I just let them tell their stories but at times their

stories got too long or they were jumping to another topic, so I tried to cut in and steered them back to my question without offending them.

### 4.	Ethical consideration

The main ethical consideration in this research is the privacy of the participants due to the fact that they belonged to an organization which is considered as 'the enemy of the state'. To ensure their privacy, a consent form was signed before the actual interviews. Therefore, the four participants were presented in this research with pseudonyms. Also, any information that would identify them in this research was taken out (Boeije 2012). However, because there was some information that was relevant to the presentation of their stories, for instance, their occupation or nature of political work but they could be identified (most likely by those who were from their generation of activists), I consulted them whether they would still wanted their stories to be included in this research and I attached a draft of their stories. They found it acceptable and gave their permission to still use their stories despite some identifiers.

Having introduced my topic and my methodology, I now turn to the rest of the chapters of this paper. The second chapter discusses the *theoretical approaches*. Subsequently, the third chapter or the *life in the struggle trajectory* presents the life stories of each participant, which cover the key moments of their lives in the movement that thickly describe the factors of their involvement, persistence and disengagement. Then, the fourth chapter discusses these factors answering the main

question and two sub-questions of this research and comparing the results with what is known. Finally, the last chapter consists of conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 2: *Theoretical Approaches to Disengagement from Social Movements*

As we know it, people join movements for various reasons. Likewise, people also leave for various reasons as briefly shown in the introduction. Presented below are the theoretical approaches to disengagement from social movements, which guided me to determine and understand why the four activists left their ND organizations.

I.   Social Psychological Approach: Gratification and Commitment

Social psychology approaches the question of movement participation through the individuals. It aims to know the role of social context in individual behaviour. In terms of collective action, "the prototypical social psychological question related to collective action is that why some individuals participate in social movements while others do not, or for that matter, why some individuals quite while others stay involved. The social psychological answer to these questions is given in terms of typical psychological processes such as identity, cognition, motivation and emotion" (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2007, 157).

One of the pioneers in the field is social psychologist Bert Klandermans. In his studies of Dutch unions and Peace movement, he identifies two kinds of defection, namely *passive defection* or *neglect* and *active defection* or exit. The first one takes the

form of disaffiliation, which a member can simply stay away from participating in various forms of once-only political activity (Klandermans 2003, 118) while the second one refers to enduring forms of participation that requires explicit exiting steps (ibid). Moreover, he argues that people disengage because of insufficient gratification in combination with lack of commitment (ibid). This suggests that feeling unhappy or unfulfilled is not enough to explain disengagement. Movement commitment, as it seems, goes hand and hand with gratification.

Conversely, there are three forms of commitment, namely affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to the degree of gratification resulting from the interaction between a movement and a participant. Then, continuance commitment is about the investment or stakes one has put into his or her participation and the availability of alternatives somewhere else. While normative commitment is the similarity between the values of the individual and of the movement (116).

As Klandermans argues, these three "do not necessarily reach the same degree [and] may decline at different rates for different reasons" (ibid). Moreover, using Moreland and Levine's (1982 cited in Klandermans 2003, 118) hypothesis, he further explains that commitment is a cyclical process, which "it increases until some peak level is reached, then it declines until the level is reached at which people decide to quit" (ibid). This implies that within this process, something has triggered a member's commitment to decline and this could be insufficient gratification. Moreover, as mentioned above, since there are three forms of commitments, they do

not decline all at once. Among the three, affective commitment is less stable. It tends

to decline when a member feels something is less gratifying, but if the person's

continuance and normative commitments are high, they may compensate the other

one and refrain the person from quitting (ibid). In other words, as these

commitments do not share the same degree of stability and thus may compensate

each other, it depends which one is decisive to a person's stay or exit.

II. Phenomenological and Symbolic Interactionist Approach: Life-Sphere, Political Sphere and Social Network

Similarly, Luisa Passy and Mario Giugni's (2000) study on micromobilization

process in Swiss solidarity movement allowed them to take a look at commitment,

sustained participation and disengagement. From their life-history interviews of

solidarity movement activists, they selected two groups of participants who are still

highly committed, thus have sustained their participation and those who have

disengaged. While Klandermans takes a social psychological view on

disengagement, Passy and Giugni (2000) view it from a social phenomenological and

symbolic interactionist perspective. Briefly, as they explain it, social

phenomenological approach "looks at the constant work of definition and

redefinition of social world by participants in social movements and their self-

positioning within this world" (119). Meanwhile, central to symbolic interactionist

approach is the interaction between individuals within society through the meanings

of symbols. These meanings facilitate the social interactions that transform the

structure of meanings. At the same time, as actors interact among themselves, they create the process called self-interaction (123).

Using these two approaches to explain movement participation, they argue that social network embeddedness and symbolic links between everyday life-sphere and political sphere are key factors to higher commitment resulting thus to sustained participation (117). This happens, as they explain:

> Once activists establish a connection between their life-spheres such as family, studies and work, and their political engagement, they are in constant interaction with the protest issues for which they mobilize… the more life-spheres are interlocked or better yet intertwined with a given political issue and the stronger this connection, the higher the chances that such an issue will become a crucial element in the construction of the self, and as a result, the higher chances that their political commitment will stabilize, leading to sustained participation. (125)

Moreover, the link between life-sphere and political sphere allows activists to make symbolic connections with their personal commitment through the process of *self-interaction*, which in turn, solidifies the meaning of commitment (125). This also results to strengthening of "activists' embeddedness in social networks" whereby it "largely shapes the orientation of life-sphere" (ibid). Life-sphere and social networks, then, both help define an individual's self and structure of meaning through self-interaction and social interaction, respectively (ibid). This implies that commitment and sustained participation thus depend on this situation, i.e. the symbolic 'interlocking' of life-sphere and political sphere (movement) and the deep embeddedness in social network linked to a movement. As long as this situation is maintained and strengthened, an activist seems likely to disengage.

Disengagement, on the other hand, is clearly the opposite. It occurs when these two factors 'become progressively separated from each other and the process of self-interaction by activists loses it strength' (117). As they note, when "activists change the orientation of their life-sphere – that is, activists who begin to symbolically disconnect their sphere from the movement or protest issue – will gradually modify their embeddedness in social networks. As a consequence, they will reassess their preferences in a way that will estrange them from political commitment, a process eventually resulting in disengagement" (126). In other words, when activists change their lives or changes occur in their personal lives and they no longer relate this to their political interest and issues, and remove themselves from social networks, their commitment also declines leading to their disengagement.

III. Structural Identity Approach: Personal Life Changes

Moving on, another social movement scholar, Robert White (2010) uses Structural Identity theory to explain the post-recruitment process in the Irish Republican Movement. According to White, this theory "seeks to understand how social structure affects the self and how the self affects social behaviour… [it] provides a framework for understanding activism over the life course, including continued participation in, disengagement from, and the development of factions and splits in social movement organizations" (342). All of these forms of participation are looked at in his study of post-recruitment process.

For the purpose of this research, only the first two – continued participation and disengagement – will be discussed. White conducted his study in three different periods – first in the mid-1980s, then in mid-1990s and lastly in late 2000. Moreover, for this study, he uses *life course* which is viewed "from structural identity theory perspective [as] 'the systematic movement in and out of social roles with age – a process that reflects a variable mixture of biological, cultural, historical and interactional conditions'" (Wells and Stryker 1988, 191 quoted in White 2010, 343). This suggests changes of roles and identities as well as situations over one's life course, of which White mainly points to as a primary factor in disengagement from activism. His findings show that activists who come from "families with a history of involvement in Irish Republican organizations tended to have lengthy activists' careers" (White 2010, 365). The activist identity is highly salient in this case because of identification with Irish Republicanism and Irish Republican organizations already at young age (ibid). This clearly suggests the role of family as political socializing agents where the generally-accepted idea that children become much like their parents is very much applicable in this case.

In terms of disengagement, his findings also show that "the complexity of [the activists'] personal lives conflicts with their activism" (366) where they "are more likely to reduce their activism for personal than political reasons" (ibid). As they experience personal life changes such as age, marriage, having children, and losing peers, they are likely to have issues with their availability, commitment to activism and even to their activist identity (ibid). In other words, when an activist acquire a

new role or identity, it tends to conflict with his/her 'old' role and identity, that is, being an activist, which as White puts it, "this identity competition led to exit behaviour" (ibid).

Chapter 3   Individual Life in the Struggle Trajectory

This chapter is divided into two sub-sections. This division is chosen to stay true to the life history approach of the individual participant and at the same time to summarize their experiences into themes. The first sub-section presents each participant's life in the struggle trajectory highlighting the key moments of their participation. It is presented as such mainly for a better flow and understanding of each participant's story because though they had similar reasons for persistence, their reasons for engagement and disengagement vary. Each individual story ends with a summary. Subsequently, the second sub-section offers a thematic summary of all stories.

I.   Individual Life Stories

The first story below is Stella's story. She was involved in ND activism in the 1960s but only as extra-curricular. Then in late 1970s, she became an ND activist and worked full-time as a community doctor and health worker trainor 1980s. In the Netherlands, at first she was a full-timer, but later became a part-time ND activist until she left in 2000.

1. **Stella**

[I interviewed Stella on 22 April 2015 in Utrecht region in the Netherlands. Our session lasted for 2 hours. Except for some interruptions as we had our interview in a restaurant, the atmosphere was relaxed and cosy. I had the impression that the participant was at ease with the interview as I did not see any indication of nervousness or anxiety. Besides, before we started the interview, we first talked about non-research related things. Also, I felt that she was also at ease with me because I was able to ask everything in my topic list, where I had 30 questions in total, plus additional on the spot questions for probing and elaboration. Because this was my first time to conduct a social research interview, I was uncertain whether I had asked enough questions or had gotten enough answers. After our interview, I made field notes.]

A. 'Serving Others'

Stella experienced her first rally upon entering university in Manila in early 1960s.

With free bus ride, no classes and out of curiosity, she joined a protest action against

the CAFA[9], and recalled it more as a fun activity contrary to prevailing belief that

rallies are scary, and violent:

> There were buses urging us to join the anti-CAFA rally… rallies were very frequent at that time including student rallies…When we were there, there were already others there before us. We were still able to go inside the Congress[10] but it was full, we were not able to enter the session hall. We just stayed in the hallway. My impression? I thought it was fun. It was okay that I joined such activity…I did not get scared because at that time there were no brutal attacks yet. It was only during the Lyndon Baines Johnson visit in Manila Hotel that a student got killed. I did not know what happened because we were at the back [of the contingent]

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[9] CAFA means Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities. In March 1961, 5000 students of the University of the Philippines (UP) protested "the congressional witch-hunt by the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities against UP faculty members who were accused of writing or publishing Marxist materials in violation of the Anti-Subversion Law" (Sison 2010, n.p.).

Jose Maria Sison, 2010. "The Incubation of Activism in the University of the Philippines." http://josemariasison.org/the-incubation-of-activism-in-the-university-of-the-philippines/

[10] House of Congressional Representatives.

The Manila Hotel rally was a protest action against Vietnam War in October 1966. By this time, Stella's participation was no longer out of curiosity, but because of her membership in a Christian youth organization (CYO), a youth arm of their (Protestant) Church. While she was active as a choir member and as a Bible teacher volunteer in an elementary school, she was also attending political lectures and discussions:

> When I joined the rally against Vietnam War, there were frequent sit-in discussions around bonfires where there were students speaking [on issues] and there were also singings…so we from the Christian group, we joined these discussions and we joined the march together with our Church pastor.

However, despite her participation, the only organization she joined was the Christian Youth. She did not join any radical student organization. In her third year, in 1964, an ND-oriented youth and student (NDYS) organization was established. The president of their organization invited them to go to its founding assembly but she did not go, as no one told her what it was all about. At the same time, she did not also interest herself in it as she focused on finishing her studies and on her plans to enter medical school. In one of her trips to the library to prepare for her pre-medical degree, she found there her inspirations to serve others:

> While I was at the university, it was already my plan to take up pre-med. In our library, there was a book about Albert Schweitzer and his missionary work in Africa, which kept me coming back to read. I thought if I became a doctor, I would like to be of service to the people, like a missionary doctor. Then later on, I read about Tom Dooley, he's also a doctor during the Operation Brotherhood in Vietnam. It was also like that [of Schweitzer]. I realized that they gave their life serving other people.

Inspired by their lives, Stella's idea of serving others materialized in her involvement in the ND movement through a Church-based health program for communities. According to Stella, a series of lectures connecting the health issues to the larger issues of society not only deepened her awareness but also her commitment to serve others:

> I joined a health program where I had a series of lectures on transnational corporations (TNCs) and the use herbal medicine. It was about the relationship of pharmaceutical industry and transnational corporations. I realized that the TNCs would really want to control the medicine at the expense of the poor people while at the same time it was possible to have herbal medicines as alternatives…there were also orientation courses about community-based health programs. The lecture series on medicinal plants and transnational corporations were part of these courses. Through those courses, I had gotten a deeper understanding of our society, the root causes of the problems and how to solve them. That was when my political commitment got deeper as well. I got politically organized. So, when I was asked to do full-time work up North to establish a community-based health institution to serve the poor communities, I accepted it.

The lectures seem to have given Stella's desire of serving others a different meaning. Rather than becoming a missionary doctor, she became an activist community doctor with a mission to *Serve the People*.

B. *Community Health Work in the North*

In early 1980s, she was assigned to the northern part of the Philippines to establish a community-based health institution to provide health trainings and projects for poor indigenous communities. Part of her work was to go to various communities to train locals as community health workers. One of her experiences, she shared, left a mark in her:

Back then, we were giving community health workers trainings. One time, we went to a very remote part of the world that was surrounded by mountains and forests but the rivers were very pristine. We gave a health and sanitation and preventive medicine training there and afterwards, the health workers told us, "Now that we know how things, we will not be afraid to get sick'. This made a deep impact to me and I think not just to me but also to other doctors. They were saying, you taught them what to do, they would tell you they would not get frightened to get sick because they knew what to do.

Her work with the indigenous community would only last for four years, as she would have to leave the country due to threats political persecution under Marcos.

C. Political Work in the Netherlands

While she was in medical school, she was arrested and detained for two months because Marcos' military agents wanted her husband who was one of the prominent revolutionaries in their region. Later on, he was arrested and spent three years in detention. When he was released, in mid-1980s, he sought political asylum in the Netherlands and so did she, and they continued on with their political work, full time:

We founded an association of Filipinos here. At the same time, I joined an institution for Filipino Concerns (FC). In the latter, one of my tasks was to provide programs for visitors from the Philippines. We were divided into concerns. I was in-charge of indigenous people and health then there was someone who was in-charge of Mindanao. If a project needed funding, I would make a project proposal, and submit it to a funding agency. Then, I also did coordination work for the visitors from the Philippines and the solidarity groups in Europe. Another task was to give an orientation for visitors before they would go to different European countries. Once they were back, we would have an evaluation, and I would do a narrative and financial report for the funding agency. So it is the whole works really. Aside from these, there was also the documentation work and speaking assignments. For instance, if there were requests for a resource person for topics like health in the Philippines, I would go, for example to Vienna or Germany. It was a 9-5

work so in effect I was not able to take care of our house. My husband was doing the same; he was also a full-timer. So, when the kids came, my oldest child practically took care of the house and the younger ones. At a certain point, she complained.

In retrospect, Stella recognized being *grim and determined* at that time as she could have also done part-time political work so she still had time for her children.

D. Exhaustion, Personal Development and Constrains

Instead of doing part-time, though, she left the *Filipino Concerns,* she felt saturated, and not personally growing in the organization anymore:

> In late 80s, I left the institution after three years…I felt saturated. I was not developing anymore. I would like to do something else and I would like to work for a living. So, I studied the language again, and I worked full-time, but I was still quite visible and active.

Stella's saturation and desire to have a change, i.e. 'doing something else and find a paying job' implies that her political work in the organization was not only tiring but also no longer challenging. Then, while she left this organization and she developed herself in other fields, she still continued her participation and commitment by joining other ND organizations:

> In early 1990s, I joined a group of migrant workers where we organized a Europe-wide formation of Filipino women, but two years later, I also left this organization[11] because of the split. Then, we formed a local ND-oriented Filipino women's organization.

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[11] She left this formation because most of its members became rejectionists.

However, in 2001, she also left this group as she once again was exhausted due to her political workload, and this time, she seemed to have reached her 'saturation point' because she did not join any ND organization after this and became inactive:

> When I left in 2001, I felt like a big rock was lifted from my shoulders because the political work was heavy. I felt constrained. Now that I am no longer committed to any organization or collective, I will no longer be told what to do, I can just do whatever I want to do.

As Stella felt relieved from doing political work and felt constrained being in an organization implies a work overload and a movement culture that one should just accept a political task regardless if one could (still) do it as an expression of one's commitment to the organization. So even if it was already exhausting for her but because she was committed, she had this idea that she might not refuse it or adjust to her work. At the same time, Stella's feeling of relief that she could do what she wanted to do also implies lack of time for oneself, which is also related to personal growth.

E. Summary

Despite her exposure to and involvement in student activism in her university during the 1960s, a fomenting period for protest and revolutionary movements in the Philippines, Stella did not immediately become a political activist. It was only later when she joined a church-based health program that her involvement became serious. Inspired by the lives of missionary doctors, Stella found her 'mission' to serve others through this health program where she became deeply aware of the

country's situation. With a resolve to help the marginalized communities as a community doctor, she went up North of the Philippines to put up a health institution for them.

However, due to heightened political persecution of activists and revolutionary forces under Marcos, she and her husband were forced to seek asylum in the Netherlands in mid-1980s, where they continued their political work, full-time. She joined an ND-oriented institution for Filipino Concerns while being actively involved in another ND-led Filipino organization at the same time. She left the Filipino centre after three years due to exhaustion and lack of personal growth, but continued her political work on a part-time basis in other ND organizations. However, in 2001, she disengaged from the ND movement, as she once again felt exhausted due to a heavy political workload, which she felt she was constrained to accept and do as a realization of her political and organizational commitment. At the same time, it seemed that one of the effects of her heavy workload was her lack of time for herself, which seemed a contributing factor to her disengagement.

After Stella's story is Mary's. She started in the ND movement in the Philippines in early 1980s where she was a full-time community-health trainer and organizer, then a full-time teacher and a teacher's organizer and leader. In late 1980s she went to the Netherlands, and volunteered part-time for the Filipino Concerns and left the ND movement in late 1990s.

2. Mary

[I interviewed Mary on 23 April 2015 in the South of the Netherlands. We agreed to meet at the station and then find a small café to talk. However, when I got there she invited me to her place. I was a bit reluctant but when she said it would just be the two of us there, I agreed because there would then be no interruptions. The trip to her place actually provided us a good opportunity to talk outside the context of research interview, thus, creating a easy and relax atmosphere and interaction between us. Then, her place was very much conducive to have an interview and also because it was her house, I sensed that she was really relaxed, open to questions and communicative. I also sensed that Mary was happy with the interview and being interviewed as I could hear enthusiasm in her tone. This was confirmed after our interview that lasted for about 3 hours. She said she was happy to have talked about her experiences. It seemed that she was not able to talk it out with her fellow activists who were still part of the ND movement. Regarding the topic list, I adjusted it because there were questions which were not applicable to her case such as questions about student activism and role in the family and children.]

A. 'Happy in the Community'

Similar to Stella, earning her degree was Mary's top priority. However, unlike the previous that still participated in activism in her university days, Mary did not interest herself in activism as she was not only focused on graduating but also on building her career. As a result, others perceived her as someone on the other side of the fence:

> When I was a student, I did not engage in student activism because my focus was to graduate on time. There was one time a big rally in our university. My brothers were there. They did not attend class. Then, with some other students, when we were entering the school gate, my brother yelled at us saying we were puppets of the administration. I yelled back that I would go to class because I would like to graduate. I really focused my attention to my studies. Even when I was already teaching, my friends they were all activists but I was not interested. So, they were also not approaching me; also because they thought I was pro-government; but I was just very studious at that time. My focus was my career. They thought that I would not be organized.

Yet, a frustrating incident led Mary to feel unhappy teaching. Upon the advice of

their parish priest, in the midst of her promising teaching career, she took a year

engaged herself in the Church's social activities. Mary considered her churc

h work as a way to her involvement n and eventually, her commitment to the ND

movement. In a lengthy account, she recalled her experiences:

> I started with the Church. I was an active member of all the organizations
> under our church. In fact, the church developed me. My mother was actively
> involved in the church and we were raised that our only social activity was
> only with the church. I was busy being a member. Then, when I was working
> as a teacher and at the same time I was also doing my masters, I slightly
> distanced myself from the church. There was a promotion to become a master
> teacher. During vacations, we were organizing drama school and
> competitions. Then, my supervisor, who was also my church—mate, and co-
> Parish council member, he did not inform about the other requirements for
> the master teacher's vacancy even though he told me I was qualified for the
> position. I was really frustrated so I went back to church and talked to our
> parish priest that I would like to be active again. He asked me to revive the
> organization of devotees of Mary. That was the start.

> Then, I went back to my hometown to do the same – to revive the local
> organization of devotees of Mary and to organize a choir. It was all going
> good. I was happy again. It was at this point that I came into contact with the
> ND movement. They had an awareness program and I attended their
> activities because the youth we would like to organize for the choir were part
> of that program. Suddenly, I was becoming aware as well…Then, I took a
> year off from work in 1982. Our parish priest invited me to join a community-
> based health program. Through this program, we were able to set-up a lot of
> projects for the community such as family planning, sewing lessons, and
> acupressure trainings. It was going really great and I felt happy…Major
> component of our program was community organizing. We went to different
> communities – peasant, fishermen, and slum dwellers. I really got immersed
> with the people. These communities were in different areas as well, including
> remote ones. My initial awareness and exposure to the communities made me
> realize the need to understand more about our society, the poverty, the
> corruption and all. So, it was at this point that I got political discussions and
> lectures from the ND movement. As it deepened my involvement and
> commitment, I became an ND activist.

Coming from a frustrating experience, it was soon overcome by her happy and

fulfilling experiences with the church and in the community. At the same time, like

Stella, her political education seems to have given her a different meaning and

perspective in life, hence, her commitment to the movement.

B. *Organizing Teachers*

As Mary's political commitment deepened, she took on a bigger task and

responsibility. She went back to teaching and became an organizer and a leader:

> I was told that I got organizing skills so I was assigned to go back to teaching
> to do organizing work. I told myself that I would become a leader to influence
> an organization and get the leadership so I became the president of our local
> school's organization. Then, I aspired to reach the district level so our
> [teachers'] alliance would have an influence on teachers, employees and staff.
> I was very diligent. We did our organizing work during breaks. I would
> discuss the situation of teachers with my co-teacher friends. Then, after class, I
> would go to a nearby school to talk but only to my teacher friends. I also
> talked to our principal so she knew I was involved in teacher's organizing.

Crucial to Mary's diligence was her profound understanding of the Philippine's

destitute situation and the idea to radically change it. Through her work together

with her collective, they were able to mobilize teachers and realize their claims. Yet,

organizing work wasn't easy as she shared:

> [Organizing] was hard. We would meet until two in the morning and then I
> would wake up early. One time, I was still sleepy, I was walking to take a
> vehicle to go to another district meeting, I was crying. I asked myself, 'what
> am I doing? Why did I choose this?

However, her difficulties would be overcome by her resolve to help others, which was one of the reasons that sustained her involvement and commitment. She further shared how she felt about her work:

> But this would go away as I thought of our political work and our organizations. It was a beautiful feeling to see other teachers getting aware and active, and to be together to fight for our demands, which we were able to win.

Being able to help others was also her motivation to continue her political work in the movement even when she already migrated abroad.

C. Moving Abroad and the Split in the Movement[12]: Great Disappointment and Deep Frustration

She joined as a part-time staff of an institution for Filipino Concerns (FC) where her work included capsulizing news from newspapers from the Philippines for the whole of Europe and bookkeeping. However, she felt the big difference from her political work back home where she was an organizer and a leader.

Consequently, a major split happened in the movement. As she was deeply affected by it, she decided to leave. Looking back, Mary was already sensing wrong practices in the movement such as corruption and misplaced criticism during her involvement with the Diocesan community-based health program:

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[12] The split in the ND movement covers the period between 1980s and 1990s, see "General Review of Important Events and Decisions (1980 to 1991)". CPP Executive Committee. *Philippine Revolution Web Central.* 30 November 1992. URL: <www.philippinerevolution.net/documents/general-review-of-important-events-and-decisions-1980-1991>

> Back in the Philippines, there were already some telltale signs of [the split]. In our health program, for example, when the funding became big, I felt there was something wrong. The nuns were leading the program but I was sensing corruption. We got a vehicle and we got a budget for it but if we wanted to use it to go the community, the nun-in-charge of finances would not allow it because they had an excursion. So we got frustrated. In fact, they would criticize us from using a vehicle to wearing shoes to go to the peasant communities. I was like, 'what is this?'

Nevertheless, although she was frustrated, it was overcome by her political education, fulfilling experiences in the communities and her desire to effect radical changes, as she explained:

> I attended lectures and trainings…I was also immersed in the areas. You see, our entire barrio got organized, including my relatives…I was really convinced of the radical changes so I actively participated and committed to realize such changes. Also, I was thinking if I were not to help, there would be no change; so much corruption, so many poor people suffering and no equality…that was also why when I came here I continued my commitment. I really wanted to contribute and to help, and I got the capacity, that was my purpose.

However, as clashes and antagonisms in the movement intensified leading to the split in 1990s, her old frustration came back and became great that it did not only affect her politically and emotionally but also her health, as she elaborated:

> Worst of all, because I sided with the ND, they were antagonistic to me. It hurt me a lot because they were my friends – used to be my friends – but they treated me like an enemy. When we were together in a big meeting – this was the breaking up moment – I could not handle it, I was crying. I was having heart attacks, literally…I was so frustrated with them… lose my trust in them. They were my friends but a lot of them became rejectionists…so to avoid their [political] antagonism and getting emotionally hurt, I distanced myself from the movement.

In effect, as she distanced herself from the movement, she also gave up her commitment.

D. Summary

Involving herself in the social activities of their Church, Mary became curious to

social issues. This led her to ask questions and she found answers in the ND

movement. Her experiences in the Philippines consolidated her politically resulting

to her active and deep commitment to the movement by doing organizing work

among teachers. In doing her political work, amidst difficulties, she felt happy and

fulfilled as she was able to help and contribute to the realization of the teachers'

demands in particular and to the movement's goals in general. Inspired by all these,

she continued on doing political work when she migrated to the Netherlands.

However, the reality of the organizational split disappointed her expectation of the

ND movement as a strong and solid movement with honest, incorruptible and self-

sacrificing activists and leaders. At the same time, the antagonism she received and

the painful disregard of their friendship and comradely relationship deeply

frustrated her. Certainly these experiences made her unhappy and her commitment

no longer meaningful. All these together compelled her to leave not only the

organization but also the entire movement, as for her the movement and the

camaraderie were no longer the same as it was before.

Next one is the story of Harold. He became a student activist in 1960s and continued on with

his activism even when he was a journalist. Then, in 1970s, he went overseas as part of a

Filipino delegation to do fraternal and solidarity work. After ten years, he moved to the

Netherlands and joined the NDFP International information office as full-time staff for

publication until mid-1990s. When his group was dissolved, he did not join any organization

anymore but remained involved in political activities until 2000 when he found full-time

work and became politically inactive.

3. Harold

[I interviewed Harold on 8 May 2014 in Utrecht region in the Netherlands. We had our interview in a restaurant but we chose a quiet corner. The interview atmosphere was relaxed. However, I sensed that Harold was a bit tensed speaking but later on I found out it was because of his stuttering. So, I gave him enough time to talk according to his pace, and it made him at ease. It, thus, encouraged him to tell more about his experiences as he was in the beginning wanted to go directly to the point. Initially, we agreed to only two hours of interview but it lasted for three hours as he answered some of my questions giving me some very detailed information, which for me was positive as I had more data.]

A. 'It Struck a Chord'

Before joining the ND youth and students (NDYS) organization, he already had

progressive and anti-American leanings. These were influenced by his library

readings of Marx and other philosophers, and of anti-American Imperialist

newspaper columns when he was in high school. He described himself as someone

who was 'floating along the river, but did not know where to go but he was there on

a river'. This seems to be his metaphor for his theoretical foundations and joining the

organization was the practical application. Also influential to his involvement was

the campus activism:

> By chance, in our university, the founder of an ND-oriented youth and students organization was one of my lecturers. I also had a lot of classmates who were members of that organization. Also, in our university publication where I was the managing editor, many of the staffers were also members of that organization.

Then, when he became an active member of discussion groups where they discussed

Maurice Cornforth's work and issues that 'struck a chord' for him because of his

poor class background. Also his experiences in demonstrations, workers strikes and

weekend immersions made him more politically aware and involved, as he shared

some examples:

> In our discussion group, we discussed Maurice Cornforth's works...then the other things that we discussed were very familiar to me because of my class background. When I was a child we lived in an urban poor community. My father had a tailoring shop and my mother was a seamstress. So, our discussions on society's problems, it struck a chord…there were also the actual experiences of arrest in a rally or harassment in picket lines. For example, during US President Lyndon Baines Johnson visit, we held a rally in front of the Manila Hotel to protest against the Vietnam War. The police arrested and detained us in a precinct. The next day, more than five thousand demonstrators came to join the anti-war protest and denounce our arrest and detention. Another example was the US Tobacco strike – Martial Law was not declared yet, that I joined where we stayed and slept, and at times, the thugs were harassing us…also at that time, there were a lot of weekend trips to the countryside just South of Luzon. It was part of integration with the masses. We would sleep there in the huts. We actually met peasants who were former Huk guerrillas. They would tell us their stories, their experiences.

Like Noah, Harold took tasks such as recruitment and propaganda writing as he

became more involved. Inspired by stories of those who joined the New People's

Army (NPA) and convinced of the ND struggles and its radical vision of society, he

continued on with the movement even when he was already working as a journalist.

Then, when Marcos declared Martial Law, he wanted to go underground but he was

persuaded to join a delegation of Filipino activists to do fraternal and solidarity

work overseas. Recognizing the importance of his commitment and contribution to

the movement, he accepted it.

B. Ten Years Overseas

As mentioned already, many activists went underground (like Noah) or joined the

New People's Army (NPA). Harold wanted to do the latter but instead of going to

the countryside, he joined a delegation of Filipino activists to do fraternal and

solidarity work overseas. Originally, his task was to establish a progressive Filipino

publication to become the news outlet for International distribution as well as a way

to establish fraternal links with other militant and radical organizations. However, as

he shared, it was not realized and the political atmosphere, as it appeared, was very

different from what he was used to:

> My particular task was to set-up a Filipino newspaper but a fraternal party
> disapproved it. So, an alternative was retyping Ang Bayan[13]…also, when I
> came there, it was a culture shock because in Manila, we were very busy but
> there it was very relaxed. We were in another part of the world. We were in a
> compound, 18 guesthouses, and we're very much relaxed there, less activity.

Nevertheless, a change of task and environment did not matter much. He went on

diligently, no matter how taxing the political work was, and find satisfaction in it, as

he further shared:

> I typed using a carbon paper because there was no mimeo machine then. Ten
> copies. I typed it twice then I distributed them to fraternal parties there and to
> other countries. Then, I retyped the Omnibus Reply as well. That work,
> though manual and hard, I felt fulfilled.

Conversely, there were also experiences of disillusionments and disappointments,

which greatly affected him. These happened when some of his comrades, including

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[13] The official news organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines, see link
www.philippinerevolution.net/publications/ang_bayan/20150221

the one who led their group, whom he regarded highly, changed their attitudes

toward him and the movement as well as the failed projects, which indicated the

error of too much optimism in the movement.

> I had this view that because they were high rankings, they would be
> exemplary and solid, but then they [their minds] got poisoned [with wrong
> ideas]. Once, while we were working during the day like planting, helping
> the peasants tend the vegetable gardens, other comrades who turned against
> the movement did dirty tricks on me. I was disillusioned and disappointed
> with them as I held high regards for them…[This experience] gave me a much
> realistic view of leaders and comrades…then, another disappointment was
> those failed projects, one after the other, that supposedly would help realize
> the victory of the revolution… It was too optimistic…because of these failed
> projects, the head of our delegation resigned. He also went against the
> movement and its leadership.

What he experienced turned out to be part of larger ideological and organizational

problems in the movement, which was later on culminated into the splintering of the

movement between rejectionists and reaffirmists of the ND line and programs. His

negative experiences would happen again in the Netherlands.

C. Split in the Movement: Opening 'Old Wounds'

In the meantime, back to his assignment in another country, after his ten-year stay

there, he sought political asylum in the Netherlands, as he could not go back to the

Philippines for fear of political persecution as this was still in the Marcos period. In

the Netherlands, he continued his political work as staff of the NDFP International

information office:

> I considered going back to the Philippines, but the Philippines was still under
> Marcos so it was actually out of the question. We were under the
> Intelligence's radar. I was able to confirm that my name was on their list

when one novelist mentioned my name among those in the list during an interview…. So I went here. I joined the NDF International Information Office. I was a full-timer the…very active. It was mainly about publication and international work. I was very enthusiastic with the work because in my previous assignment, because of many failed projects, I felt disappointed. With this work, I enjoyed it; I felt fulfilled. I think, I contributed a lot as well through this work.

Then, when the split in the movement happened, the old 'wounds' of his past

disillusionment with his comrades were opened:

Then, I experienced the same disappointment and disillusionment when I was here. Some of those in the leading positions in our collective at that time when they came here they had a lot of ideas, they were very enthusiastic but later on they were the first ones to get cold and then during the split, they went to the other side – the anti-ND movement faction… there was also this experience with an NDF Europe spokesperson who went to our place for dinner…I was personally close to him…at one point, he was asking us to sign a statement without us knowing why would we sign it. We invited him for dinner, and suddenly he was asking us to sign that paper asking for reforms in the movement. I was shocked…We did not sign it…Later on, what we did was right, because they used it against the reaffirm ND leader…Then there was also this person, one of the ringleaders from Mindanao who was assigned here; he had so many write-ups under a pen name criticizing the reaffirm ND leader…We realized that was the start, they were the representatives of rejectionist faction from the Philippines.

Like Harold indicated, as he did not sign the paper, he maintained a reaffirmist

stance because for him split was part of a revolution and he still believes in the

movement, as he further explained:

It was clear that I was with the reaffirm side. Even back in my previous assignment when there were already factions, I sided with the ND movement because I believed that was part of the low and ebb of revolution…also, I am still convinced of ND movement's ideologies…what I have learned before. My take is that this split was a big twist and turn. I see it like the "line of struggles" in China during the Chinese revolution. They had that until they won…I still trust that the ND line would win even though I do not know the specifics; I trust that most of the regions would prevail.

Though he was still convinced of the movement's ideologies, after the split, when his group was dissolved, he did not involve himself organizationally.

Harold chose not to be part of any organization anymore fearing that his negative experiences would happen again.

D. Fears and Family Concerns

A later incident and identification of his 'handicap' substantiated his fear and it also made him skeptical. He believed that being in a group or organization again would be a 'waste of his time'. For instance, he shared, one incident when his former group for propaganda work was being revived; he refused to be part of it because he was turned-off by a comrade's attitude:

> There was a time I was invited to join the publication collective again, but I declined because of my experience with another comrade, who was part of that group. One time, we talked and then suddenly he was already giving criticisms on the political work here [in the Netherlands] without knowing the causes, the real situation. He was just new then, so I was taken aback. He reminded me of my past experiences so I thought it was a waste of my time, more meetings again with tensed situations.

In terms of his 'handicap', he was able to give it a name later, but this seemed to be a factor to his skeptic attitude because he had no capacity to express himself well, particularly in tensed situations:

> Another factor with my negative experiences was my stuttering, which I was only able to identify as a physical handicap later when I saw this film "The King's Speech"...I had this fear of talking particularly during meetings especially when I was with others who could talk well...I feared talking...I could not express myself...I felt unhappy...ah because you have to be very good 'no to agree on another opinion...because when I was in my previous assignment, that was the case...so I wanted to express my opinion but I had

> this fear of talking...I was stuttering...I had it when I was a child but it became less when I grew up...if it is not one-on-one like this [interview], I'm okay...but with a group, it's different....so I had that feeling especially in the past.

In essence, his skepticism illustrates his fear, and issues of democracy in the group. He feared that because he was unable to express himself well, he had no voice in the group. It implies that in terms of democratic participation in the group, group members like him who was not very good in speaking was not able to participate especially when eloquent speakers dominated the discussion.

Moving on, while he was no longer organizationally committed due to these fears, skepticism and negative experiences in a group and with his former comrades, he still participated in political activities. For instance, he joined an asylum campaign for a Filipino revolutionary and made a video for the campaign. However, he attend activities mostly during his free times as he also decided to stay at home to take care of their children so his wife, who was also an activist, could do full-time political work. Later on, due to family concerns in the Philippines, he also disengaged politically from the movement, albeit for quite some time:

> I needed to help my sickly parents. So, I decided to apply for a free study offer from the Labour department, then I found a job so I had lesser time for the movement…In 2000, I found an internship for six months and by the end of 2000, I found a full-time job and worked for three years…From that moment on, I had lesser time for activities and could not attend anymore.

After working full-time, Harold seemed to have time to be visible in various activities of the ND movement again. In fact, in 2005, he joined an ND affiliated migrant organization, but he pointed out:

> Now, I have lesser time…before it was natural even if I was not a member the paper works were done in our house because my wife was one of the main organizers of this organization. I was helping her with writing, photocopying, it was natural. Then I formally joined but only as a member…I join the activities whenever I am available or whenever I wanted. I do not engage in organizational things like meetings to avoid my previous negative experiences.

This illustrates that though Harold joined out of his intensions to help his wife, and not because he had overcame his fear and scepticism of being in a group, he re-engages again organizationally and politically. The only difference this time is that the intensity of his participation is no longer the same as he when he was very much active and committed.

E. Summary

With influences of his early readings on Marxism and other philosophies, poor class background and the lively student activism in the campus, Harold joined the radical student and youth organization. His political education and experiences in rallies, workers picket lines and peasant communities shaped and sustained his commitment and participation in the movement. Then, when Martial Law was declared, he went overseas to do fraternal and solidarity work. After ten years, he moved to the Netherlands and continued his political work there. The same disillusionment caused by his negative experiences while he was in his previous assignment overseas recurred as the split in the movement happened in the Netherlands. Fearing that these experiences would happen again and sceptical about being in a group, Harold decided not to get involved organizationally anymore.

Nevertheless, even though he organizationally disengaged after the split, he was still involved from time to time in various political activities. However, due to family concerns he became politically inactive. When he had the time again, he participated in and joined an ND-oriented organization again. This illustrates that his disengagement was temporary.

The final story is Noah's. He became involved in the ND movement in early 1960s, went underground in the 1970s and stayed there for more than 12 years. In the 1990s, he joined the NDFP (National Democratic Front of the Philippines[14]) panel and staff in the Netherlands until he left in 2001.

4. Noah

[I interviewed Noah on 12 and 13 May 2015 in Utrecht region in the Netherlands. It lasted in total six hours. Unlike the three participants, Noah asked for the topic list beforehand so he would know what to say because he had memory issues. The interview took place at a small and cosy café. Seeing him sitting relax and focusing his attention to our interview, I sense that he was comfortable with the place and with the interview. Also, because he had the topic list beforehand, he was ready to answer my questions in details. Noah had the tendency to repeat same events and give details about it as well as to talk about unrelated things so I also had to cut him off at times. Nevertheless, the interview also yielded meaningful data.]

A. 'Bound to Activism'

Noah was one of the founding members of the ND-oriented youth and student (NDYS) organization in their university. Before this, he was already a member of

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[14] NDFP or NDF; also mentioned in this paper as NDFP International information office.

another radical student organization in the campus. However, though in general, he

joined the organization because of his radical leanings coming from a family of

Communists, intellectual discussions it offered and majority of his friends were

interested in politics, he admitted that before they founded the other organization he

was more of a weekend activist and was drawn to *barkada* or group of friends, as he

narrated:

> My first formal involvement in student activism was in early '60s when I
> joined the cultural association. I was first year in college that time. The
> association had study groups. We discussed books of progressive [Filipino]
> historians like Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino, or sometimes
> those who were diligent they read Andres Bonifacio's poems. Then, we also
> discussed translations of writings on anti-colonial struggle of Propaganda
> Movement. Then, I also participated in demonstrations. Though, I was more
> of a weekend activist during this period in terms of organizational meetings. I
> was more interested in social affairs in a sense of *barkada*. I had two groups of
> friends – one with Geology students and one with English majors because I
> started with Geology then I shifted to General Social Sciences.

This would change after he went back from his study abroad. When he returned, he

became more serious with activism. He narrated further:

> I became active and I knew it was serious political activism when a comrade
> who was part of the appointed acting executive committee of the old
> Communist Party asked me to do political and underground work like meet
> this and that person or go to this and that place. We actually became close; he
> considered me a comrade.

Even though he was not officially a member of the old Party, Noah accepted the task

because he considered himself a Communist. Though it was only while he was

studying abroad when he joined a Marxist study group under a Communist Party

that he considered himself as such, one of his big influences was his family, as he

recalled at length:

My two uncles were members of the [old] Communist party, even my father but he was not on the list. He was arrested in 1950s together with the leaders of *Hukbalahap* and the entire *Huk* movement. The politburo was brought to Manila. He was detained for three days but I saw that he was not hurt. I was there. He was just questioned. At that time, I was already aware of the *Huk* rebellion and communism. For me, it was just normal. They were heroes. They were patriotic guerrillas. They were helped by the Americans to fight against the Japanese. But when the Japanese left, I knew it's not against the Japanese anymore, it's about revolution. So, I knew they're for liberation and social change because of my Christian background. It's like brotherhood of all men; no one is oppressed and no one oppresses; but I did not have any Marxist analysis back then. Also, when I was a kid, it was Second World War, my uncle and his journalist friends were often in our place. As kids, we were allowed to listen to them. They were discussing European and world affairs. They were talking about the Red Army who defeated the Germans; it was like it saved the entire Europe and the World. So, I understood the role of the Army and the Soviet Union as good because they defeated Hitler and they helped liberate Europe.

With these background influences, Noah felt he was bound to activism. Though in the beginning he was lesser serious, after studying Marxism, he became very active in student activism taking on tasks such as setting up of their organizations in different places, attending a lot of meetings and preparing for demonstrations. Then, before Martial was declared in September 1972, Noah became part of a semi-underground group responsible for the movement's work. When Martial Law became a fact, like many other activists, he went full time in the underground and took on propaganda work.

B. Going Underground and National Democratic Front (NDF) Work in the

Netherlands

While he was on an assignment, his wife, who was also in the underground was

arrested and detained for a longer period to pressure him to surrender. Yet, he did

not. Instead, upon learning his wife's arrest, he went to a guerrilla zone and stayed

there until health reasons compelled him to leave. He, then, continued his

underground propaganda work involving various organizations. In late 1980s, he

went to the Netherlands and joined the NDFP International information office as a

staff, mainly for writing tasks but he was also an official member of the peace talks

delegation.

C. Personal Crisis and Security Issues

It was at this point of his life in the struggle that he had a personal crisis where he

had to choose between politics and personal matters:

> It was this time that I had a crisis. I was still an NDF officer and member of
> the peace panel. But I also wanted to go with her [wife] to return the favour
> that she left everything behind just to be with me. I was thinking, this time, I
> would do something for her and for the family.

He was referring to a 2-year scholarship for him and his wife to study at a

theological seminary of Church of God in the United States. The scholarship would

mean a lot to his wife, as it would advance her church work. When she joined him in

the Netherlands, she set up a bible study group, which became a Christian church

(where he was also a member). Yet, she could only get it if he joined him. He

resolved his crisis by choosing to go with her, as he felt he owed her the many

sacrifices she made for him, as he illustrated:

> In the past, she left her world and everything behind and even defied her
> parents, her family and their clan to go with me. First was we eloped. I was
> already doing semi-UG [underground] education work…despite her parents
> warning that my father was a Communist [from the old party[15]]; that my life
> was a mess and that she would just end up poor with me…then, when
> Martial Law was declared, I went full-UG, she went with me again and we
> got married… then in the UG house, our movements were restricted…she
> could not just go out...and her work was more with the house committee like
> taking care of the house, the children there...[then] she was arrested and
> detained for three years. She was released in late 70s and at that time she was
> the longest held female detainee. The main reason they held her that long
> they were also waiting for me to surrender. Then later on, when she was
> released, she was being followed and they literally let her know that…then
> she and our daughter joined me here while she had a very high paying job.

Aside from his feeling of indebtedness to his wife because of her sacrifices, it seems

that giving back the favour to his wife was his way of reconciling his feelings of guilt

of not going through the same ordeal as his wife who was imprisoned and of not

dying in the battlefield as his NPA brother, as he confessed:

> I had this feeling of guilt…I was not imprisoned, I was not
> tortured…Obviously, I am alive, I did not die…I was not wounded… those
> who were close to me they went through very difficult periods…my brother
> died…for me, I feared being captured and tortured that being killed. Actually,
> it was easy for me to die in the battle. In fact, that was ambition before…then,
> there was also this feeling of regret for not dying in the battlefield. Actually, it
> feels anti-climactic that you get old. I feel jealous of my brother…but at the
> same time I also feel grateful that I was given a place of refuge…our family
> actually only reunited here in Europe, that's why I call this place, 'the city of
> our gracious refuge'. All the while in the Philippines it was either I was semi-
> underground or totally underground. I was rarely with my wife and daughter
> and even then, it was secret and stolen moments…and of course, I was able to
> continue my political activities to some extent.

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[15] The old party refers the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas or PKP – 1930* (The Philippine
Communist Party 1930), www.pkp1930.org.

When it comes to his political tasks, his decision to join his wife to study in the United States [US] supposedly should not be a problem because he could just take a leave from his NDF work. However, for him, joining his wife in the US also ran security risks as the NDF was (and still is) under the radar of US Intelligence agencies. He felt that joining his wife there meant literally cutting his links with the NDF and the movement, hence another personal crisis:

> I had to cut my links because I could not be there in the US and then I got questioned so I had to be prepared. I had a debriefing. Also, I was advised that the CIA and NATO were clever. They got the details. They know what is what. If I cut my links, they would know that I was no longer part of anything, may it be secret or what…Anyways, nothing happened in the US, but I could always say I was no longer a member. That was the main reason I had to give up all my positions to join my wife in the theological seminary of church of god.

Thus, to resolve his guilt and fear, and show his indebtedness to his wife, he officially left the NDF. However, after two years of their theological study, they went back to the Netherlands, but he did not join the NDF again or resume his political work in any ND organization for that matter because as he was also a member of the Church and his wife was a preacher, it was, in his own words, 'a delicate matter'.

> I feel if I am again officially active in the NDF, my name listed as a member, it will have a negative impact on the church; it's like divided loyalty. There are views like I am with a group of officially atheistic and for the overthrow of the government, for armed struggle and then member of the church that preaches different things. Of course, I am supporting the preaching of the church…the preaching of my wife although my views on society, in terms of structure, still Marxist and materialist that's why I inhibit myself from giving sermons. I don't do that. I only lead discussions, bible interpretations but I don't do sermons because they also know that I do have other unorthodox ideas different from the church.

What this presents are the changes in Noah's priorities. His conscious decision to choose their church over the NDF or re-engage in political work yet again illustrates his feeling of guilt and indebtedness to his wife. Because his wife was one of the Church's leaders, he wanted to protect the church's image and show his full loyalty by not joining an ND organization anymore.

D. Summary

Growing up in a family of radicals, involving himself in student activism when he entered university in early 1960s was for Noah 'instinctive'. He joined a student cultural association and participated in the study groups discussing various issues and alternative histories. Then, during a study abroad, he joined a Marxist study club, where he became a Communist. When he went back in 1964, he helped formed a radical youth and student organization. From there, he became very active. His Marxist studies and experiences of doing organizing work strengthened his commitment to the movement. When Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, he and many other activists went underground doing various propaganda works for the movement, including a two-year guerrilla work in a guerrilla zone. After this, he moved to the Netherlands for political asylum and joined the NDFP International information office as an official staff and member of the peace panel.

However, when he was confronted with a personal crisis where he had to choose between joining his wife to the United States for two years and his political commitments, he chose for his wife over his politics because he felt guilty and

indebted to her. At the same time, joining her in the US meant quitting his organization because he feared for his safety as the NDF was under the US Intelligence surveillance. Then, upon returning to the Netherlands, Noah's priorities seemed to have changed altogether. If before his main priorities was his political work, when he returned, he decided not to go back to the NDF as it would affect the image of the church, and would question his loyalty to the church as well.

II.   Thematic Summary

1. Reasons for their involvement in (ND) Activism

As presented above, each participant became involved in the ND movement due to varied reasons and through various ways. Through her Christian youth organization, Stella participated in student activism. Her Christian background seemed to have influenced her to participate in activism, albeit short and taken as extra-curricular activity. Moreover, she particularly did not join a radical organization because of two things – no one recruited her but at the same time her focus was her studies. However, Stella became involved in ND activism again when she joined a (Protestant) Church-based health program because of her desire to serve others inspired by the lives of missionary doctors she read back in college.

Meanwhile, for Noah and Harold, their attraction to activism was both influenced by and because of their readings as well as their family's political and economic background. As college freshmen, they joined a radical student organization where they actively participated and where their understanding and commitment also deepened.

Unlike the three participants, Mary intentionally did not involve herself in student activism, as her main goals were to finish her degree and have a career. However, frustration and happiness led her to ND activism through her involvement with social activities of their parish.

In conclusion, their reasons for *engagement* or involving themselves in activism could be summed up into the following bullet points:

- Religious background

- Lives of Missionary doctors

- Family of Communists

- Marxism and other Philosophical readings

- Class background

- Friends

2. Reasons for their persistence

The participants shared similar reasons for continuing on with their activism.

Through their political education and experiences in marginalized communities,

protest actions and strikes made them deeply aware of society's problems and of the

movement's goal to solve them. Moreover, they translated their belief in radical

changes into action by moving on to a higher level of political and organizational

commitment by becoming ND activists with bigger tasks and responsibilities. With

political education, experiences and beliefs as their foundation, their commitment

was also strengthened by their positive experiences in doing their political work in

the Philippines and to some extent in the Netherlands. Additionally, for Noah and

Harold, Martial Law was also a push factor to do full-time work in the movement.

In gist, their reasons for *persistence* or continued involvement and commitment

could be summarized in the following bullet points:

- Political education

- Positive experiences in marginalized communities, strikes and demonstrations

- Belief in radical changes

- Positive experiences in doing political work

- Martial Law

3. Reasons for their disengagement

While each participant shared similar reasons for persistence, they had different reasons for disengaging. For Stella, she left because she felt exhausted with and constrained to do political work as she committed herself politically and organizationally to the movement. At the same time, the lack of personal growth in the organization also caused Stella to leave. At first, as she wanted to develop herself, she left the *Filipino Concerns.* Then, the seemingly lack of time for herself due to heavy workload also contributed to her disengagement from the ND movement.

As for Mary, the event of split in the movement caused her to feel greatly disappointed with the movement and deeply frustrated with her comrades, whom she treated as friends but seemingly became antagonistic to her. As she felt no longer happy and her commitment less meaningful, she left the ND movement.

Also for Harold, the wounds of his past experiences of disillusionment and disappointment were opened during the course of the split in the movement in the Netherlands. After the split, he decided not to join any group or organization anymore out of fear that his experiences would be repeated again, and out of

scepticism that being in a group or organization again would be a waste of his time due to his inability to express himself. While he was organizationally inactive, from time to time he still joined political activities but family concerns caused him to also withdraw from these. However, later on, he re-engaged by joining an ND organization again, albeit not as active and committed as he used to be.

Lastly, as Noah felt guilty of losing someone he loved and felt indebted with his wife for her sacrifices, Noah decided to leave his organization. Another push factor for him to quit his political work was his fear for their safety as his organization – the NDF – was under the intelligence radar of the United States, the country where he and his wife were headed to for a scholarship. Even when they returned to the Netherlands after a two-year study, his indebtedness to his wife showed his changes of priorities as he did not resume his political work or go back to the NDF because this time he felt that going back would mean a bad image for their church and a questionable loyalty to their faith.

In summary, all three – Stella, Mary and Noah had disengaged from the ND movement by leaving their organizations. Harold's disengagement is quite different. He also disengaged but in the form of not joining any organization after his own group was dissolved, while still involving himself in political activities of other organizations from time to time. Yet, for a while he also disengaged from this involvement. Later on, he re-engaged by joining and participating in an ND organization, albeit less intense than before.

The following are their various reasons for disengagement:

- Exhaustion due to political work

- Lack of personal growth and time for oneself in the organization

- Frustration

- Disappointment

- Disillusionment

- Fear and Scepticism

- Family Concerns

- Guilty feelings: Indebtedness

Chapter 4   Thematic Discussion

This chapter discusses three themes presented in the previous chapter, where each participant's reasons for involvement, and disengagement vary while they more or less shared the same reasons for persistence. This is divided into three sub-chapters: Engagement and Persistence, Disengagement and Conclusion.

  I.   **Engagement and Persistence**

    In terms of involvement, Abigail Fuller (2014) identifies three main groups of determinants, namely individual characteristics, micro-structural factors and movement-based factors (36 – 46). Examining the participants' reasons, these appear to fall in the first group. According to Fuller, individual characteristics are "factors that predispose some people to participate in social movements generally and in particular social movements" (36). These include predisposed *beliefs* and *values* that "are congruent with [a] movement's ideology" (36), *identity*, *feelings of efficacy* and *perceptions of risks*.

    As it seems, Stella and Mary's religious background as well as Stella's inspiration from missionary doctors suggests an inculcation of a set of values such as compassion for and serving others, justice and equality, which they found in common with the ND movement. This can also be said true for Noah and Harold, whose family background and progressive readings are influential to their beliefs and political leanings. In fact, Noah even felt he was destined to be a revolutionary. Related to this is the identity, which "refers to the movement participation as a

manifestation of identification with the group" (Klandermans 2004, 361). The

participants did only find connection of their values and beliefs to that of the

movement's, but they were also able to identify with it as student activists or in

terms of their profession (education, health). Then, self-efficacy is the feeling of

meaningful contribution in social changes, and this is also applicable to them,

though this is more prominent during their sustained participation. Lastly, joining

collective action and social movements entail risk and people certainly take that into

consideration (Fuller 2014, 39). While not everyone dares to take such risks, the four

did precisely the opposite. Despite the risks and costs akin to ND activism, they did

not only join the ND movement, but they also committed to it and sustained their

participation over time.

Speaking of commitment and sustained participation, the participants shared

similar reasons for persisting in the movement, namely political education, positive

experiences, belief in radical changes and the events of Martial Law. To explain

sustained participation, van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2007) note, "In trying

to understand the interplay of socialization, long-term activism, and the social and

political context, we propose to use the concepts of biographical continuity and

conversion" (196). Citing Roth (2003), he notes, "Biographical continuity describes

life history where participation appears as the logical result of political socialization

from someone {and] "*Conversion* implies a break with the past" (van Stekelenburg

and Klandermans 2007, 196). Moreover, they cite the role of events, albeit differently,

in both concepts. As they further explain, "Critical events are supposed to play a

crucial role in both situations…In the context of biographical continuity, the event means the last push or pull in the a direction in which the person is already going, whereas in the context of conversion the event means an experience that marks the change of mind" (ibid).

Applying these concepts to the four participants, the political education, positive experiences and belief in radical changes are all part of their political socialization, which resulted to their commitment and sustained participation. As for critical events that made major impact on their lives and made them decide to continue on with the movement, these could then be for Harold and Noah their experiences in demonstrations and strikes, and the particular event of Martial Law. Interestingly for Stella and Mary, there were no mention of critical events in their story that could be viewed as last push or pull for their participation. What their stories present were that the combined elements of their political socialization turned them into long-term committed ND activists.

Moving on, given that the main research question of this paper is disengagement, the next sub-section discusses each participant's disengagement in a more elaborate fashion that the first topics.

II.   Disengagement

a. *Stella: Exhaustion and Personal Growth*

Stella's exhaustion due to political work could be related to the concept of burnout. One of the three key elements of burnout is exhaustion (the other two are cynicism

and inefficacy) where one feels "drained and used up, without any source of replenishment" (Maslach and Gomes 2006, 44). Stella's feeling of relief from heavy political work when she left illustrates such exhaustion. At the same time, reflecting burnout's definition to her case, as a "long term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding, and is caused by 'a combination of very high expectations and chronic situational stresses'" (Slackers 2007, 3 quoted in Cox 2011, 11), her exhaustion could indeed be traced to the stresses from her heavy political workload and to the high expectations that come with it.

However, Klandermans (2003) argues, "It is not much so much the costs and tensions associated with participation that produce burnout...it is the high costs or high levels of psychological tensions *in combination* with high levels of commitment that produce burnout" (122). This illustrates the earlier observation (*in Stella's story*) that as Stella was highly committed to the cause, she felt she had to accept every task she was given to even though she felt burdened already. Additionally, Klandermans also points out that burnout happens because activists do not adjust with their work and do not make time for themselves (ibid). This relates to Stella's exhaustion as well. As she was loaded with political work, she seemed to have no time to relax or do what she would like to do. Parallel to this is the issue of personal growth, which is also related to exhaustion as her previous reasons to leave. Generally speaking, personal growth is an essential part of every individual and a continuous process. Like in the workplace or other similar avenues, social movements are also a place for individuals to grow and develop. For instance, as shown in Rozsnafszky and

Hendel's (1977) and Mahoney's (1975) studies, women activists' self-growth and

self-actualization were facilitated in and by their movements. Likewise, Melanie

Panitch (2008) describes personal growth as "a consequence of social movement

experiences and the extent to which it frequently causes an upheaval in how women

activists define themselves" (24). This could also be said about Stella given her

persistence in the movement, though until a certain point. Her exhaustion from

political work seemed to have affected her personal growth to the extent that she

needed to leave to give time for her self-growth needs.

b. Mary: Frustration and Disappointment

One factor that entices or motivates individuals to join social movements is their

emotion. According to James Jasper (2011), "emotions are present in every phase and

every aspect of protest. They motivate individuals, are generated in crowds, are

expressed rhetorically, and shape stated and unstated goals of social movements"

(286). Moreover, these emotions are characterized as affective and reactive responses

generated throughout the process and stages of movement participation, as Jasper

(2003) also explains earlier elsewhere:

> As an integral part of all social action, affective and reactive emotions enter
> into protest activities at every stage. Some help explain why individuals join
> protest events or groups, ranging from emotional responses they can have as
> individuals to those that recruiters can stir in them. Others are generated
> during protest activities, including both affective ties among fellow members
> and feelings toward institutions, people, and practices outside the movement
> and its constituent groups. These affect whether a movement continues or
> declines, and when. In all stages, there are both preexisting affects and shorter
> term emotional responses to events, discoveries and decisions. (158)

In addition, not only it affects the movement's existence, but also one's disengagement. Looking back at Mary's story, one of her motivations to continue and commit to the ND movement was her happy and fulfilling experiences in the community. At the same time, their situation affected her feelings of solidarity and it was strengthened more through her political education. However, as she was frustrated by the loss of camaraderie in the movement and disappointed by the movement's split, she decided to leave. This illustrates that while emotions can be a pull factor into a social movement (Lofland 1981, 1982 cited in Goodwin, Jasper and Poletta 2004; Jasper 2011), it can also be a push factor out (Jasper 2011).

Mary's disengagement as a result of her frustration and disappointment relates to Klandermans' gratification and commitment concepts. He explains, "Any measure that makes interaction less gratifying helps to undermine commitment" (Klandermans 2004, 373). In this case, as Mary's negative experiences hurt her, made her unhappy and even affected her health, her commitment also weakened. This, however, looks simplistic because in the past before she went to the Netherlands, Mary also had a frustrating experience but she did not leave the movement. In fact, she continued on. This can be explained by looking at the three forms of commitment, namely affective, continuance and normative (Klandermans 2003). Affective commitment is about the gratifying experiences of Mary in the movement while continuance commitment refers to everything she had invested in it and to the alternatives on offer outside the movement. Then, normative commitment is about the congruence of Mary's own values and those of the movement. These three

balances each other out but the balance can be tipped-off if the more stable forms of commitment (i.e. normative and continuance) declines (Klandermans 2003, 118), and it can lead to one's disengagement.

In Mary's case, all these three went down as a result of her negative experiences from the split. As she experienced antagonism from her fellow activists, she felt deeply frustrated weakening her affective commitment. Then, for her this antagonism betrayed the camaraderie among them activists while the movement's split disappointed her expectation of a solid and honest movement. It shows that Mary valued friendship, trust and honesty highly. When these no longer corresponded with her own values and with what she perceived as the movement's ethos of camaraderie and integrity, her normative commitment declined. Consequently, her continuance commitment also declined when her affected health presented a new or 'alternative' situation for her.

c. Harold: Disillusionment, Fear and Scepticism, and Family Concerns

Another affective emotion that influences one's participation in social movements is disillusionment. This emotion can either pull people to engage into or push people to disengage from movements. For instance, people's growing disillusionment with the government's policies and inaction to social issues can result to protests and other forms of collective action (e.g. Pleyers 2005; Klatch 2004; Saltman 2014). In contrast, people (or activists) can also get disillusioned with movements prompting them to leave, and it can manifest in several ways. For instance, Latin American

social movements activists disillusionment manifested in "the dynamics of group

participation, the behaviour of their co-activists who rise to leadership positions, or

to the bossiness of foreign or middle and upper-class NGO workers" (Hellman 1997,

n.p.).

Harold's disillusionment is similar to the Latin American activists in terms of

group participation and the behaviour of co-activist, though in his case, they were

already in the leading positions. When his co-activists who were in leading positions

turned against the movement and changed their attitude toward him, he felt

disillusioned as his idealized image and expectations of them as highly regarded and

well-meaning activists-leaders turned negative. Harold's negative experiences

instilled strong fear in him that it made him even sceptical about joining

organizations again believing it would be a waste of his time, specifically he had

difficulty with speaking in a group situation. This suggests group participation and

inter-relationship issues in his previous organizations, where a group leader has a

role. Reviewing the concepts of democratic leadership, John Gastil (1994) cites its

three functions, namely, distributing responsibility, membership empowerment and

aiding deliberation (958 – 962). By definition, distributing responsibility means that a

"democratic leader…seeks to evoke maximum involvement and the participation of

every member in the group activities and in the determination of objectives" (Krech

et al. 1962, 435 quoted in Gastil 1994, 958). As Harold felt he was not able to

participate meaningfully in discussions or voice out his opinions because of his

stuttering suggests the possibility of failure on the part of his leaders to perform such

function. At the same time, as leaders are most often eloquent speakers, they can dominate the discussion, which leaves little room for members like Harold to participate.

Moving on, though Harold did not join organizations again, he continued to participate political activities of the movement but only during his free times because he took care of his children. Then, when he had a full-time job, he disengaged from the movement, albeit for a short period. Harold's family concerns indicated changes in his personal life. This relates to the notion of biographical availability, which is "the absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risk of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities" (McAdam 1986, 70 quoted in Wiltfang and McAdam 1991, 995). As shown, Harold's family concerns caused him to reduce and eventually stop his participation in the movement.

d. Noah: Guilty feelings

Similar to Mary and Harold, emotion factors as well in Noah's disengagement, which is guilt.

His decision to leave the movement was determined by his guilty feeling of indebtedness to the sacrifices of his wife for him. At the same time, his guilty feeling from losing his brother and being 'spared' from the ordeals of being captured, imprisoned and from dying in the battlefield was also a contributing factor to his decision.

In his article, "Taking Account of our Specific Deeds", Aaron Ben-Ze'Ev (2000) explains guilt as similar to "other emotions that are typically concerned with those close to us…the relationship to our intimates is also of central importance" (498), which in Harold case sounds true. Moreover, while guilt can stem from one's own doing, it can also be caused by something out of one's control (ibid). For Harold, his guilt came from his own past decisions in life involving his wife's sacrifices as well as from the outside – the death of his brother. When it comes to not experiencing the high-costs akin to activism and being a revolutionary, it could be both his own decisions and the circumstances around him. It could be that he was very cautious like other revolutionaries who did not experience capture or death or he was just 'at the right place at the right time'.

In terms of social movement participation, guilt also works both ways like disillusionment. While guilt can be a motivating factor for social change (Thomas, McGarty and Mavor 2009), it can also be a sign or a reason for activists to leave as shown in Harold's case.

III.   Conclusion

In conclusion, from what has presented in this paper, we can see the changes in behaviour, perspectives and choices of every participant as we traversed through their life in the struggle trajectory. Also, we can see varying reasons for their movement participation. Clearly, each of them had different reasons for involvement and disengagement while they share similar reasons for persistence. The diversity of

their reasons for joining and leaving illustrate the point of Klandermans that a complex set of determinants influences one's engagement and disengagement (2003). In addition, this also shares Anissa Amjahad and Mathieu Vieira's (2010) observation that determinants for disengagement differ per individuals in the same organization, though in this case, determinants for engagement also differ per individuals, not only in the same organization but also in the same movement.

At the same time, the results also have shown not only their reasons for participation but also the causes behind it illustrating the dialectical relationship between the social structures, events and individuals, which in turn shows the usefulness of career approach. As we have seen, family, school and religion were instrumental to their involvement. Quite interestingly, while the organization was instrumental to their persistence, it was also to their disengagement. To recap, Stella's exhaustion and issues of personal growth were brought about by too much political work from the organization. The split in the movement and the relationship with fellow activists and leaders affected Mary and Harold. While for Noah, it was rather more the circumstantial (organizational) events that affected his continuity in the movement.

Related to this is the prominence of emotion-related reasons for most of them, which the organization certainly plays a role. For persistence, they all mentioned the positive experiences while for disengagement two – Mary and Harold, it was the negative experiences. This brings in the importance of positive experiences and

having positive feelings in the ND movement organization in particular, and in the ND movement in general, as ways to retain activists over time.

Lastly, in terms of participation trajectory, interestingly, the three of them followed a similar pattern – *joining, persisting* and *leaving.* Harold on other hand, followed a trajectory of *joining, persisting, leaving* and *joining* again. This process is called "individual abeyance, [which] occurs when a person temporarily leaves contentious politics, but returns to participation later in life" (Corrigall-Brown 2012, 18). As this research draws to a close, this topic can be further explored in later studies on disengagement.

Chapter 5   Overall Conclusion and Recommendation

The main points shown in this research are the multiplicity of reasons for engagement, persistence and disengagement, various causes behind these reasons and the prominence of emotion-related reasons for disengagement. In terms of limitations of this research, having four participants in a particular place certainly does only give a partial and small picture of disengagement from the ND movement. Nevertheless, it gives us a general sense of ND activists' disengagement and a reference point for further study of this topic in this movement. Moreover, when it comes to literature on disengagement from the social movement, I feel that I could have done more thorough literature research and discussion if the French studies on this topic were translated in English. It seems that the French social movement scholars are one of the pioneers on this topic.

Another limitation of this study is my less familiarity with the method as this was the first time that I conducted a life history research. There might be steps and processes that I had missed which might be crucial to the data and the research. In addition, as interviews cannot be made available to protect the identity of the participants, reliability of their life stories cannot be checked unless confidentiality is also made between me and the other interested party. Lastly, the time-consuming aspect of life history approach is also a limitation, especially if one considers studying disengagement, but it is useful for researches involving individuals, trajectories and biographical consequences.

As for recommendations, I would propose having further studies on this topic, especially in the Philippines to have a bigger and better picture of ND activists' disengagement. It is interesting whether the reasons for disengagement of the participants, who are from the older generation of ND activists, are similar or recognizable to the younger generation who left the movement.

For social movements, based on the case of four participants, I would recommend having debriefing, evaluation or assessments for and with members to ensure that they are not overburdened with political work and also to foster their health and well-being, not only politically but holistically.

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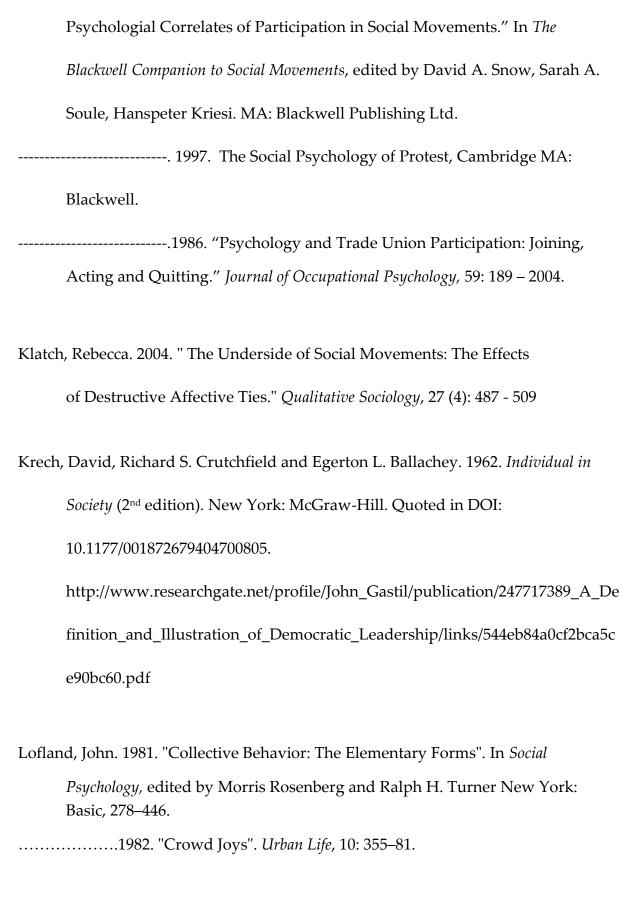
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