

Lund University  
Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies  
Master Programme in Asian Studies  
South-East Asia track  
Spring semester, 2009

# WALK!

Framing a successful agrarian reform campaign in the  
Philippines



A Minor Field Study report, January-March 2009

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Cover photo, *Sumilao farmers harvesting cassava roots* by Lennart Niemelä

## ABSTRACT

Agrarian reform is a long standing issue in the Philippines and has seen a number of peasant uprisings, revolts and rebellions ever since colonial times. In the wake of the Marcos era, the new constitution came with new promises of agrarian reform and set up the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) to implement (re-)distribution of lands. However, efficient implementation is held back by patron-client relationships between the landed elites and government officials. The Sumilao farmers' campaign is a success story under CARP. The campaign became a landmark event in the minds of the agrarian reform movement and the general public. This study is interested in how social movement organizations mobilize for action, how the actors relate employed strategies to the outcome of the campaign, what the effects were on the agrarian reform movement and conducts a narrative analysis of the framing processes of the Sumilao farmers' campaign. The campaign conclusively led to two important outcomes: strengthened horizontal relationships in civil society between agrarian reform SMOs and increasing cooperation between the agrarian reform movement and the Catholic Church, explained by frame bridging between the agrarian reform frame and the Church's social justice frame and facilitated by a shared non-violence methodology. Both outcomes would be of importance for the later CARPER campaign.

Keywords: Philippines, Sumilao, Agrarian reform, Catholic Church, Framing processes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When writing a thesis so rooted in fieldwork as this one was, many thanks are due to the institutions, organizations and people who have supported me throughout the research process.

First, thanks to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for granting me the Minor Field Studies (MFS) scholarship which funded a significant part of my fieldwork.

Thanks to Ateneo de Manila University, Development Studies Program that housed me as a visiting scholar during my two months fieldwork period. Without their hospitality and guidance, this thesis would not have come to be. To the staff: Leland Dela Cruz for taking me in and *ate* Mel for her assistance; to Jayeel Serrano Cornelio and Elizabeth Phillips who shared office space with me; to Jen Tan for assisting me with transcribing; to Liza Lim of the Institute of Social Order for sharing bundles of articles with me.

Thanks to Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Institut Kajian Etnik (KITA) for arranging the fieldwork course. To the staff: Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, Denison Jayasooria, Puayliu Ong and the rest of the wonderful people at KITA. Special thanks to Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hassan who gave me some very important advice.

Thanks to the National University of Singapore (NUS), Asia Research Institute (ARI) for allowing me to conduct library research as a visiting scholar and Kalaichelvi Krishnan for her welcome.

Thanks to all my informants who shared with me their time and knowledge and greatly expanded my knowledge on agrarian reform issues in the Philippines.

Special thanks to Reggie Aquino of KAISAHAN for being my coordinator; to the staff at BALAOD Mindanaw that accommodated me during my visit to Mindanao; to Raymar and his family for having me in Sumilao; to the farmers of Sumilao and Calatagan for their hospitality.

Thanks to my friends: Stephanie Limuaco, Elinor Lumbang Boayes, Jewellord Nem Singh and Jonas Svensson whose support and conversations meant a lot to me.

To all those I have not been able to mention, you are not forgotten. Many thanks to all of you, my friends.

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*“Walking long distances is a high form of struggle.” – Risa Hontiveros*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 The research problem*

The Philippines has a rural population of nearly two-thirds of the total population with nearly three-fourths of the country's poor. Corresponding to the 73% of Filipinos living below the poverty line (Martin 1999: 182), 75% are landless or near-landless (Cramb 2001: 31). While agriculture employs 45.2% of the labour force, agricultural output accounts for only one quarter of GDP, roughly equivalent to that of the industrial sector, measured at 16.1% (Martin 1999: 182).

Agrarian reform is a long standing issue in the Philippines ever since its colonization by Spain and subsequent colonization by the US. The US colonial policy aimed at assuaging agrarian unrest while attending to landowner - and commercial - interests, which resulted in dual principles where land entitlements were coupled with “safeguards which protected claimants of prior property interests”, something that has subsequently been successfully manipulated by the landed elites to their benefit (ibid: 188). Martin (1999: 201) argues that the duality in the US colonial policy is inherent in all subsequent attempts at land reform and thus continues to haunt agrarian policymaking in the Philippines.

The transition to democracy after the ousting of the Marcos regime in 1986 is still far from becoming a consolidated democracy. A democracy is defined as consolidated, according to Shin & Wells (2005: 89-90), when its citizenry embraces democracy at both regime and process levels before its authoritarian alternatives. Based on the 2002–2003 East Asia Barometer Surveys, Shin & Wells (2005: 93) conclude that even if democracy is preferred at regime level in the Philippines, preference for democratic process is remarkably low; 75% for democratic regime respective 48% for democratic process<sup>1</sup>. This divergence is related to a low average level of freedom and a high average level of corruption<sup>2</sup> (ibid: 98-99). Studies of the Philippines have characterized it as an

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<sup>1</sup> Percent of respondents with a net preference for democratic (as opposed to authoritarian) regime or process.

<sup>2</sup> As measured by Freedom House's 7-point indices of political rights and civil liberties in

“elite democracy”, “cacique democracy”, “weak state”, “oligarchic democracy”, “low-intensity democracy”, “patrimonial oligarchic state” and “clientelist electoral regime” (Quimpo 2008: 21-22).

A result of the merging of continuing patterns of inequality with democratic institutions, the Philippines poses a difficult setting for the implementation of agrarian reform (Riedinger 1995: 15). The issue is cross cutting and spans many political and socio-economic problems; *e.g.* “concentration of property rights that have contributed to landlessness”, “unequal distribution of power in the political system”, “bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption in the institutions of the state” (Putzel 1992: xxii).

Agrarian reform addresses problems of poverty alleviation and national economic development, but does also by definition involve a redistribution of not only land, but political power (Putzel 1992: xx; Riedinger 1995: 2). Riedinger (1995: 15) argues that political liberalization in itself will not bring about agrarian reform, but that it makes government more responsive to reformist pressures. The following quote shows that political empowerment of the rural sector as favourable to democratization has been adopted by state reformists:

[C]ertainly for AKBAYAN, and for me as a member of AKBAYAN, agrarian reform is very, very much about democratization, not just economically empowering the rural sectors, politically empowering them as well to be able to not only shape, influence policy and select and make accountable their leaders but themselves exert political power directly through their organizations or through their leaders who enter the electoral arena[...] It’s also democratization in terms of shaping a democratic culture for citizens in the rural area as well, where some of the worst poverty is seen in the Philippines.

R. Hontiveros 2009, interview, 27 February

Following the installation of a new regime under President Aquino after the ousting of Marcos 1986, the 1987 Philippine Constitution states “The State shall, by law, undertake an agrarian reform program founded on the right of farmers and regular farmworkers, who are landless, to own directly or collectively the lands they till, or in

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2004 and according to Transparency International’s Global Corruption Report 2004.

the case of other farmworkers, to receive a just share of the fruits thereof. To this end, the State shall encourage and undertake the just distribution of all agricultural lands, subject to such priorities and reasonable retention limits as the Congress may prescribe, taking into account ecological, developmental, or equity considerations, and subject to the payment of just compensation” (PEASANTech 2008?). As such the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), based on the Comprehensive agrarian Reform Law (CARL; RA 6657), enacted in 1988, is a continuous program that will not end until its goals are reached. This is reiterated in Department of Justice (DOJ) Opinion 9 series of 1997. The funding for the program has been given budgets for 10-year periods since 1988, however, the Land Acquisition and Distribution (LAD) target has a backlog of 1.3 million hectares.

When the funding thus ended in June 2008 and was only extended with a six-month period, it caused worry for a paradoxical situation. “Ending the implementation of CARP without completing the acquisition and distribution of lands covered by the program will result in the anomalous situation of having persons owning landholdings in excess of the allowable retention limit under the law” (PEASANTech 2008?).

This is the context of the Sumilao farmers’ walk.

### *1.2 Aim*

The purpose of this study is to further our understanding of the social dynamics of agrarian reform by examining the mobilization strategies underlying the Sumilao farmers’ campaign in 2007 when they walked 1700 km from their homes in the Mindanao province of Bukidnon to the capital of Manila. Proper implementation of agrarian reform in the Philippines faces many obstacles, but as the Sumilao farmers’ case is a success story, studying the processes behind it could provide proponents of agrarian reform, in particular in the Philippines, useful insight into campaign work.

### *1.3 Research questions*

The overarching research question that guided this thesis was: *How do agrarian reform movements in the Philippines mobilize?* During the initial phase of fieldwork, the social



movement organizations engaging in agrarian reform would refer to the successful Sumilao farmers' walk as a landmark event. Applied to the Sumilao farmers' campaign, it follows to ask: *How do the actors relate the mobilization strategies to the outcome? What were the effects on the agrarian reform movement?*

#### *1.4 Theoretical framework*

The theoretical framework is based on collective action frame theory, belonging to the social movement literature, as formulated and systematized by Benford & Snow (2000). Collective action frames are the resultant products of the active, processual production and maintenance of meaning by social movement actors for "constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers" in order to provide inspiration and legitimacy for action (Benford & Snow 2000: 613-614). It follows that as active and processual, collective action frames may not only differ from one another, but also challenge existing ones.

This is complemented in places by general civil society literature.

#### *1.5 Methodology*

##### *1.5.1 Research design*

This qualitative study was constructed as a unique case study on the Sumilao farmers' campaign, as it was perceived as a landmark event by the agrarian reform movement. A constructivist perspective is implied as the research addresses the continuous construction of meaning by the actors.

##### *1.5.2 Sources of data*

Primary sources consisted of interviews, field notes and unpublished material made available from key informants. Secondary sources consisted of books, journal articles and media publications.

##### *1.5.3 Sampling*

Key informant interviews were held during my fieldwork in the Philippines between January-March 2009. I was hosted as a guest researcher by the Department of

Development Studies at Ateneo de Manila University at the time and was, prior to the key informant interviews taking place, introduced via the department to Socrates Banzuela of PAKISAMA, who I later also interviewed, associate director Mario Galvez and policy advocacy officer Reggie Aquino of KAISAHAN for informal discussions on the agrarian reform movement and to provide me with a better point of departure for setting up the interviews.

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted<sup>3</sup>. Following the first key informant interview I used the snowball effect in combination with maximized sampling. The informants were usually able to refer me to more subsequent informants than would be within a manageable timeframe. I had to make a judgement call filtering out some possible informants so I would end up with a stratification where key actors from as many different types of organizations as possible were represented. This method of stratifying the interviews proved informative in that it gave me an image, even though only a sectional snapshot, of how various organizations were linked to each other; this understanding extended beyond the chosen key informants. Furthermore, the snowball effect made it possible to maintain the interviews with relevant actors to the Sumilao farmers' case.

Although the interviews with Jaime Tadeo and Gerry Bulatao are not referred to in the text, the informants' in-depth knowledge of agrarian reform and institutional processes in the Philippines were of great importance for my understanding of the issue and consequently aided the research process.

#### *1.5.4 Transcription and analysis*

Transcription was assisted by students from the Department of Development Studies at Ateneo de Manila University. The transcripts were analyzed using narrative analysis which also relates to the choice of theory. As collective action frames concerns the active, processual construction of meaning in order to mobilize action can best be analyzed using this form of analysis which emphasizes the connections interviewees' make between events, how they make sense of them and how they understand their

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<sup>3</sup> For details see APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS.

own role within them (Bryman 2004: 412-413). The mode of narrative analysis used is structural analysis which emphasizes “the way a story is related” and “the use of narrative mechanisms for increasing the persuasiveness of a story”.

#### *1.5.5 Limitations and participation*

The fieldwork was mainly carried out in Metro Manila where most of the organizations have their offices.

One exception, the interview with Archbishop Ledesma, was done at the Bishop’s residence in Cagayan de Oro. During my stay in Cagayan de Oro, I was accommodated in the offices of BALAOD Mindanaw and also met with the Sumilao farmers, BALAOD Mindanaw staff and people from various offices related to Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan during a press conference held at the university. I also went to Sumilao to visit the farmers living there, accompanied by a student from the area.

I ventured twice, first with students from the Department of Development Studies at Ateneo de Manila University, second with KAISAHAN staff, to Calatagan to meet with the farmers there. During the first visit the Ateneo de Manila University students were carrying out interviews for their papers. During the second visit, De La Salle University (DLSU) students and volunteers had been invited to partake in a program, called *BALIK CALATAGAN: Kumustahan at Pakikipagbuklod sa mga Magsasaka ng Calatagan*, introducing them to the issues concerning the Calatagan farmers and arranged by the Center for Social Concern and Action’s (COSCA’s) Institutional Advocacy Program (IAP) in partnership with the DLSU-Committee on National Issues and Concerns (CoNIC). I was accompanied by KAISAHAN staff who, after the DLSU students had left, were meeting with the farmers regarding upcoming demonstrations.

When farmers from several provinces marching on Manila had reached the city on 3 March 2009, I joined with them and walked with them and the social movement organizations for the remainder of the demonstration and documented the event by photographing. On 4 March 2009, I continued meeting some of the farmer groups that visited Ateneo de Manila University in an event to bond with students engaged in the

agrarian reform issue. Farmers from Sumilao, Banasi and Calatagan were present during both events.

There was also a screening of documentary filmmaker Ditzzi Carolino's documentary on the Sumilao farmers' march and the Task Force Mapalad (TFM) farmers' hunger strike held at Ateneo de Manila University for the agrarian reform advocacy community which I attended. The screening was followed by a public discussion.

Interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder to which all the informants gave their consent to appear with name, title and organization. The interviews were aided by a template with a set of topics to discuss. Whenever there was need for it, I would scribble short notes on important issues to follow up during the interviews. The set of topics was slightly altered before, during and after interviews depending on the informant's position and should be understood as processual; this method is referred to as progressive focusing. It enabled me to get the most out of each informant's background and focus more in-depth on themes that emerged from the interviews. A complication that could arise from using progressive focusing is that the questions in subsequent interviews might go unanswered in the interviews preceding them. To clarify in this case, it was more a matter of filtering out irrelevant topics and emphasizing already existing ones.

The fieldwork I conducted focused on the activities by SMOs in the CARP Extension with Reforms<sup>4</sup> (CARPER) movement and as such it excluded those other SMOs which pursued other agendas. In particular this should be mentioned about the groups on the far left who are pushing for their own Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARB) as opposed to CARPER.

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<sup>4</sup> A bill proposed to extend CARP and reform it in order to plug some of the loopholes that has enabled landowners to escape redistribution of their lands.

## 2. FRAMING PROCESSES AND THE SUMILAO FARMERS' CASE

### *2.1 The Sumilao farmers' case*

The following introduction to the Sumilao farmers' case is based on the narratives of the key informants<sup>5</sup>.

The farmers of Sumilao, in the province Bukidnon located on the island of Mindanao in Southern Philippines, were organized as a tribal group, the Higaonon tribe (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February). In 1996 they and farmers from the surrounding areas to form the People's Organization (PO) MAPALAD during a time of increased advocacy on agrarian reform. MAPALAD later joined the provincial federation PALAMBU which became a member of the national federation PAKISAMA. A.J. Bag-ao (ibid) says that organizing work was facilitated by these already existing structures as she first met them in 1996.

The farmers were not aware of the status of agrarian reform implementation in their area and were encouraged by BALAOD Mindanaw to find out through the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) (ibid). The response was that it was being processed, but the farmers later found out that they had been issued titles when they received a cancellation from a Regional Trial Court. 137 farmers were awarded Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) in 1995, however, the landowner was able to retrieve the property by a connection with the Executive Secretary of then President Ramos (S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March).

When the farmers found out that they already owned land they had spent years processing for through CARP, they proceeded to occupy and till the land until 3 days later armed goons drove them out by firing upon them and letting their carabaos loose (ibid).

In 1997, some of the farmers launched a hunger strike in Cagayan de Oro and Manila, supported by Agrarian Reform Now (AR Now), PAKISAMA and a PhilDRRA affiliated NGO (ibid). "It lasted 28 days. High drama". It received wide attention from the

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<sup>5</sup> For additional details see BALAOD Mindanaw (2007); AFA (2008a); Philippine Daily Inquirer (2007).

agrarian reform movement, media and the public as well as politicians as it neared the 1998 presidential elections.

The hunger strike resulted in a win-win decision by President Ramos, giving 100 ha to the farmers and 44 ha to the landowner (ibid: A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February). However, the landowner managed to get the Supreme Court to retrieve the 100 ha. The Supreme Court decision in 1999 was so technical that “[e]ven lawyers found it difficult to understand” and it “was discussed in law school” (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February).

Following the 1999 final decision by the Supreme Court, one of the farmers committed suicide in protest (S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March).

The farmers then turned to the new administration under Joseph Estrada<sup>6</sup> who promised to help them (ibid). As nothing happened for five months the farmers went on hunger strike against the President. Estrada’s response was aggressive and consequently the Sumilao farmers later joined forces with the movement that proposed the impeachment of the President, successfully removing him from office during the EDSA II uprising in 2000.

So over the years since 1996, they went on hunger strike, they went on land entry knowing that they were already owners. They even attempted to stop the traffic, lie down on the road. They were imprisoned for several times, they adapted. They went into a lot of dialogues, they joined all major conferences just to say something about their case. They wrote letters and then they lost in the Supreme Court in 1999.

A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February

And then finally they said, “Ok, we lost. We lost”. And they waited[...]

S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March

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<sup>6</sup> Reid (2001: 781-782) argues that Estrada was able to emerge as the following President out of a reaction against Ramos’ failed neoliberal programme and that his pro-poor agenda played out favorably combined with the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Estrada’s supporters were mainly amongst the poor and the excluded in society who identified with his background (Carroll 2004: 69-71).

## *2.2 The walk as form*

### *2.2.1 Genesis and dramatization*

S. Banzuela (2009, interview, 5 March), national coordinator of the national federation of farmers PAKISAMA, very specifically brings up discursive and strategic processes as part of their agenda: “One of the basic strategies of PAKISAMA in pushing, in advocating for Agrarian Reform is to identify a policy precedent land case that can dramatize and highlight the issue, especially the importance of Agrarian Reform, and to highlight the issue also in the implementation of Agrarian Reform”.

It is ironic, considering that the Sumilao farmers lost their lands due to a technicality, that what opened up an opportunity for them to reclaim their lands was also due to a technicality. A provision in the Rules of Conversion stated that the plan for conversion should be fully implemented after five years, however, when five years had passed in August 2004, there was still no sign of activity within the 144 hectares area (S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March; A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February). The land owner had sold the property to the San Miguel Corporation in 2002, who planned to construct a piggery on the property, a construction which was not covered in the approval for converting the land.

In November 2004, the farmers sent a petition to the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), asking them to cover the property again since it had not been converted (ibid). The petition work took two years. PAKISAMA was in an organizational crisis between 2003 and 2006 and was consequently unable to offer assistance to the farmers. During this time the pleadings and organizational work were carried out by the NGO BALAOD Mindanaw.

PAKISAMA’s crisis ended in July 2006 when a Unity Conference was held (S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March). The elected chairperson at the conference was a Sumilao farmer who brought to attention that the farmers were planning to take action. A proposal to the International Land Coalition (ILC) was made for funding and in July 2007 a USD 20,000 project was approved.

The farmers were agitated and a sense of urgency to do something followed when the San Miguel corporation started the construction of buildings and roads on the property: “When they saw 4 buildings, concrete, being constructed, and when they saw a boar that is the size of a cow [...] [t]hey said: ‘We have to stop this. This cannot go on because if we allow San Miguel to continue building structures, whatever we do will be useless because we will not be able to plow cemented fields anymore [...] and they already started constructing roads.’ So they were really worried” (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February).

The decision to do the 1700 km walk, by September 2007, was the outcome of a planning meeting in which S. Banzuela and then PAKISAMA president Crispino Aguelo partook with farmer leaders of SALFA, MAPALAD and the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association, BALAOD Mindanaw, PhilDRRA and BMFI (ibid). There was a need to dramatize the case as a peaceful protest, but the farmers felt that they could not repeat the hunger strike they did 10 years previously and there was also the question of how it would be possible to pressure government from so far away (S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March; J.D. Capacio 2009, interview, 18 February). A.J. Bag-ao (2009, interview, 18 February) mentions that there were a number of inspirational sources: the leaders had all gone through a peace-building formation program, some were inspired by “The salt march” – a movie on Gandhi, and there were already talks about an ‘exodus’. It is unclear who spawned the idea for a walk during the brainstorming, but as J.D. Capacio (2009, interview, 18 February) puts it: “What I’m sure is if [the Sumilao farmers] didn’t start the idea, then at some point they owned it, they embraced it. That’s why it came to be. If the farmers are not really sure on a form, it would manifest and it would really not succeed”. The walk was set to begin on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hunger strike, October 9 (S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March).

### *2.2.2 The impact of exodus*

It was felt in the agrarian reform community that there was a need to raise awareness on the issue (A.J. Ledesma 2009, interview, 13 March; A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February). That it was something that had been lost in the minds of the general public. A.J. Bag-ao (2009, interview, 18 February) relates this loss of awareness, at least what



concerns the Sumilao farmers' case, to the Supreme Court revocation of then President Ramos' decision to award them land. The farmers had already gotten media attention and when the Supreme Court ruling came, the technicality of the ruling was so complicated that it escaped the news pages and was little known outside the legal community. The timing of the walk's arrival in Manila was planned to coincide with Congress' decision on extension of CARP in December 2008 (J.D. Capacio 2009, interview, 18 February). This was a deliberate way to generate support and "put [agrarian reform] in the minds of the public again". Walking, being a time consuming endeavor, also signaled that agrarian reform is a continuous, live issue (A.J. Ledesma 2009, interview, 13 March).

A few quotes highlights the impact the walk had on not only rural areas, "but on urban people because, my God, it boggles the mind!" (R. Hontiveros 2009, interview, 27 February).

So suddenly Sumilao now is a walking distance. Bukidnon has become walking distance. Manila. No one has ever...the concept of distance. Well. This is amazing. Many groups here, later, urban poor groups: "My God, we are very near Malacañang<sup>7</sup>. We don't march every day. Why don't we march to Malacañang every day?"

S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March

I think [...] it provides a visual for the urban centers to see that [...] this is still a rural country and there are a lot of people coming in from rural areas and they constitute a bigger number.

A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February

A.J. Bag-ao (ibid) further relates this impact on the urban mind to the effectiveness of the walk in reaching out to the public.

The distance of the walk and the physical struggle of the walk was related in several interviews to the physical hardships of being a farmer (A.S. Garcia 2009, interview, 2 February; J.D. Capacio 2009, interview, 18 February; R. Hontiveros 2009, interview,

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<sup>7</sup> The presidential palace.

27 February). A view of the walk, as a form of demonstration, was interpreted as being an active event naturally inherent to the farmers, to what they could do.

The physicality of the walk was developed on as being lively and active, and as such it was contrasted with the previous hunger strike which was interpreted as less alive than walking (J.D. Capacio 2009, interview, 18 February), “a last resort”, meaning “death through hunger” and carrying little energy and hope (A.S. Garcia 2009, interview, 2 February). A.S. Garcia (ibid) further contrasts the hunger strike with the walk by viewing it as waiting for something to happen instead of making something happen; that agrarian reform must be earned.

The walk as form also made the farmers’ issue in particular, and agrarian reform in general, personal.

When planning the walk, there were 100 volunteers, but BALAOD Mindanaw could not handle 100 people due to accommodation issues (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February). Aiming for 50 volunteers, they used medical examinations where they had the doctors set a high health limit for participation. However, when the walk began, a few farmers secretly joined up with marchers, making the total 55 participants. “I think the number of farmers walking was significant and the fact that they were able to come here together, you know, you see a lot of faces walking”.

I.J. Chan-Gonzaga (2009, interview, 17 March) continues by saying that when the farmers walked from one parish to another, one dioceses to another, speaking to the bishops, they made it personal. It was no longer the abstract notion of a ‘farmer’, but a face and a name that was fighting for his land.

It was also a personal matter for Cardinal Rosales who used to be bishop of Malaybalay during the time of the farmers hunger strike. Prior to the Sumilao campaign, I.J. Chan-Gonzaga (ibid) recalls the Cardinal as a “very quiet man” and that the Sumilao farmers’ campaign was unique for the Cardinal’s engagement in a political position considering his authority in the Catholic church.

So he knows the people personally. He knows the place. And I think he got fed up with all these news that that's barren lands. I think he got so irritated because he mentioned this during his homilies: "I would say mass there every month. And I remember clearly that that's not barren land." He said, "I see irrigation of natural water supply. It's not even created by the National Irrigation Agency. It is a natural irrigation." He kept repeating that again and again and again. And he was pointing to the farmers, "I know you! I know you!" and then he was asking for names and the farmers would reply "*patay*", or dead already. So he knew them! I think what made him really engage was that these were people he knew. These were farmers he broke bread with.

I.J. Chan-Gonzaga 2009, interview, 17 March

What also was interpreted by the public as a sense of duty expressed by the farmers was how they displayed discipline and decisiveness as they managed to walk the distance as a group (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February). This was also mentioned in the Philippine Daily Inquirer as having captured the imagination of the public, according to S. Banzuela (2009, interview, 5 March).

The appearance and importance of the walk as that of making a sacrifice, both in the eyes of the public and of the informants, seems to have affected the discourse by the informants as some of them made more than one reference to the endeavor as a 'sacrifice' (A.J. Ledesma 2009, interview, 13 March; A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February; R. Hontiveros 2009, interview, 27 February). Furthermore, there seems to have been a "religionization" of the discourse as the farmers' marches in general were referred to as pilgrimages, the groundwork for the Sumilao farmers' walk as 'genesis' (J.D. Capacio 2009, interview, 18 February) and A.J. Bag-ao mentioned how some of the farmer leaders used the term 'exodus', which is also mentioned in a manifesto of the Sumilao farmers from March 2008 (BALAOD Mindanaw 2008, online). It is a question of speculation whether or not these terms surfaced out of a long term engagement with the church or out of the need to galvanize support from the church.

The Sumilao Farmers' case received its resolution in March 29, 2008, when the San Miguel corporation settled an agreement with the Sumilao farmers in which 50 ha was donated and 94 ha was covered by the CARP Voluntary Offer to Sell (VOS) scheme, totaling the entire contested 144 ha property (AFA 2008a; KAISAHAN 2008).

### *2.3 Analysis of the walk as form*

This section will provide an analysis of the processes that led to the walk emerging as a form of action and the responses to those processes. Collective action frames uses an array of concepts which will be explained first.

The action oriented function of collective action frames is divided into three core framing tasks: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing. The core framing tasks addresses the problems of consensus mobilization and action mobilization (Benford & Snow 2000: 615).

Diagnostic framing is the task of identifying the problem (ibid). In this case: the failure to properly implement agrarian reform.

Prognostic framing attempts at formulating a solution to the problem; it “addresses the Leninesque question of what is to be done”, and on reaching consensus in this matter as well as how to mobilize for action (ibid: 616-617). The prognostic framing takes place within a social movement industry (SMI) as well as in relation to the social movement organization’s (SMOs’) “opponents, targets of influence, media, and bystanders”.

Prognostic framing is usually where SMOs differ from each other; *e.g.* the SMOs on the far left of the political spectrum proposed the GARB as opposed to CARPER.

Motivational framing provides adherents with a vocabulary for engaging in collective action and for sustaining participation and is articulated as severity, urgency, efficacy and propriety (ibid: 617). These vocabularies can be emphasized in different combinations which can affect their outcome as either complementary or contradictory.

In addition to the three core framing tasks there are three overlapping processes which affect the way frames are “developed, generated, and elaborated”: discursive processes, strategic processes and contested processes (ibid: 623). Contested processes refers to challenges to actors’ reality construction from opponents or from actors’ who proposes opposing interpretations, but will not be elaborated on in this study as that would have constituted a different stratification of sampling at the onset of fieldwork.

Discursive processes refers to speech acts and is in itself divided into two processes: frame articulation and punctuation<sup>8</sup> (ibid: 623). The former aligns experiences and events in a coherent fashion; an emerging collective action frame is not necessarily new in its ideational sense, but in its interpretation. The latter highlights issues, events or beliefs that can be conceptualized to link events or issues and symbolize “the larger frame or movement of which it is a part”.

Strategic processes, or frame alignment processes, are goal oriented and aim to recruit new members, mobilize adherents and acquire resources etc. (ibid: 624). Four such processes are identified: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation. Frame bridging links “two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem”. Frame amplification “involves the idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs”. Frame extension involves the incorporation of outlying issues into an SMO’s interests and frames with the aim to increase adherents (ibid: 625). Research on frame extension was not carried out, but the call for CARPER was at times merged with rallies against President Arroyo’s proposed charter change (that aims to keep her in office beyond the mandate period). Frame transformation is the changing or replacing of previous understandings and meanings.

### *2.3.1 The form emerges*

The conception of the walk as form corresponded to a prognostic framing task; what needed to be done to achieve implementation of agrarian reform for the Sumilao farmers? This study identifies discursive and strategic processes that guided the planning of the demonstration.

PAKISAMA implements an agenda that explicitly addresses punctuation and frame amplification. The Sumilao farmers’ case was identified as being able to set a policy precedent and as such the choice of form aimed to punctuate, to discursively highlight agrarian reform in general.

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<sup>8</sup> Benford & Snow (2000: 623) alternatively calls ‘punctuation’ ‘frame amplification’, but as the term is also used with a different meaning when discussing strategic processes, ‘punctuation’ is used instead to avoid confusion over the terms.

This study identifies three different types of strategic processes that guided the shaping of the walk as form: frame bridging, frame amplification and frame transformation.

As Active Non-Violence practice was a long time methodology of PAKISAMA (see chapter 3.2) a peaceful form was sought and the walk was likely a result of frame bridging between an agrarian reform frame and a non-violence frame. As frame amplification, PAKISAMA also sought a dramatic form in order to reopen peoples' minds to the issue, to invigorate agrarian reform. The choice of drama was a consequence of a frame transformation process where hunger strike was contrasted as not being alive when the movement sought to breathe new life into the issue. A novel form of expression was needed and new methods, a new drama, had to be found.

Vocabularies of severity, urgency, efficacy and propriety was utilized to bring about action.

- Severity

Poverty and landlessness were conditions the farmers had to endure and their need to address this was most tragically expressed in the suicide of a Sumilao farmer following the Supreme Courts' decision.

- Urgency

When the San Miguel corporation began converting the land and built constructions on the property, the farmers realized that the land could become useless to farming. If it continued unhindered the loss of the farming lands would be final.

- Efficacy

In order to gain support for the cause, there was a need to successfully reach out to the public and thus use a form of demonstration that would enable the farmers to educating the public in the process.

- Propriety

The hunger strike had been an inactive, waiting, form and following the frame transformation, the re-evaluation of what methods to use, the walk was an active, physical endeavor, meaning that agrarian reform had to be earned through hardship; it would be their duty to walk if their goal was to be achieved.

### 2.3.2 Responses to the walk as form

The success of the walk can be reflected in the responses to the various framing processes. The responses are those of both the public and the actors intermingled, but interrelates in how the walk can be perceived which has implications for future events. Below follows how the responses corresponded to certain processes.

Responses to the discursive processes:

- Frame articulation

The “religionization” of the terminology is certainly a type of frame articulation in that it is relating to the walk as a form expressing the need for agrarian reform. It would be subject to further study, but the reason this terminology captured peoples’ minds could be related to the history of peasant social movements in the Philippines that related the *pasyon*, Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection, to liberation<sup>9</sup>.

The hardship of conducting a walk was seen as an expression inherent to the farmers. This frame articulation explains in part why walking was chosen for subsequent campaigns as well.

- Punctuation

PAKISAMA’s intended punctuation of agrarian reform was successful as the Sumilao farmers became “poster boys” of agrarian reform (see chapter 2.3.3).

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<sup>9</sup> A detailed account of the history and meaning of the *pasyon* in relation to peasant social movements is given in R.C. Ileto (1979).

Responses to the strategic processes:

- Frame amplification

The dramatization, frame amplification, resulted in the phrasing “putting faces on agrarian reform”, expressing how the walk successfully personalized the issue and made people relate to it.

Walks had been conducted in the past as a form of demonstration, but the novelty of the Sumilao farmers’ walk was in its distance. This was especially successful in capturing the minds of people in urban centers.

### 2.3.3 *The Banasi and Calatagan farmers*

The successful Sumilao campaign created a new buzzword in the land development language: ‘*Mag-Sumilao ka*’, to ‘Do a Sumilao’, meaning to do the impossible, and specifically to walk (A.S. Garcia 2009, interview, 2 February; S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March). “Sumilao became a poster boy for the CARPER issue” (I.J. Chan-Gonzaga 2009, interview, 17 March), “the icon of agrarian reform” (J.D. Capacio 2009, interview, 18 February).

The success in turn led to a frame amplification, how CARP can serve the interests of the farmers, and a punctuation in that it highlighted the Sumilao case to symbolize the agrarian reform movement, especially the CARPER movement, as a whole. The effect the Sumilao campaign had on other farmer groups, e.g. the Banasi and Calatagan farmers respectively, would inspire subsequent actions.

In November 2008, another group of farmers from Banasi, Bicol, walked 444 km to Manila<sup>10</sup>. According to A.S. Garcia (2009, interview, 2 February), this was “a product of the Sumilao walk”. Like the Sumilao campaign, the outcome of the Banasi farmer’s walk also became a success story. The cancellation of their land titles was reversed.

The Banasi farmers had previously joined the Sumilao farmers in their walk as they passed their area, but did not continue on to Manila (ibid). The experience, however,

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<sup>10</sup> For additional details see AFA (2008b).



inspired them to organize a walk of their own, promoting their own local issue. The Banasi walk, was coordinated by SALIGAN and two farmer leaders from Sumilao, paralegal Renato “Ka Rene” Peñas and Yoyong who visited them as officers of PAKISAMA. The experience of the Sumilao walk also taught the Banasi farmers that the Church can be a useful ally providing food and logistics and how it was possible to network from parishes to the highest leaders of the Church. Bishop Pabillo and Cardinal Rosales had become very symbolic during the Sumilao campaign and were known to be influential. Having been contacted by SALIGAN, Bishop Pabillo, seeing the campaign as timely, offered further contacts and provided the Church as a haven for the farmers. Upon reaching Manila, the national attention they caught pressed to Office of the President to act as there were also allegations that someone in the Office of the President is related to the land owners. The victory was further attributed to the Church’s successful influence on Cabinet Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III in the Office of the President. Secretary Bello was moved by the farmers and, also being of the opinion that there was “foul play inside the bureaucracy”, “the Banasi walk created a venue for him to exercise what he wanted to do.”

The other group of farmers from Calatagan had also walked with the Sumilao farmers in December 2007, supporting them in their case (J.D. Capacio 2009, interview, 18 February)<sup>11</sup>. “The Calatagan farmers felt we need to support this, [the Sumilao farmers] need to be victorious so that we could [...] hold on to a victory, a success story and claim to the world that agrarian reform works”.

The contested lands in Calatagan is, however, still in a dispute between the farmers and Asturias Chemical Industries, who happens to share the same owner as San Miguel Foods Inc. In supporting the Sumilao farmers, the Calatagan farmers wanted to show that they could be mobilized as well for their own case, which they proceeded to do in April 2008 (ibid).

During the Sumilao campaign, the Church asked the Calatagan farmers to remain silent on the part of their own case so as not to confuse issues and “get the ire of Ramon Ang”,

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<sup>11</sup> For additional details see Calatagan March (2008).

the owner, who had given the Sumilao farmers a chance at negotiations (ibid). From the Calatagan farmers walk in April 2008 and onwards, the Church gave its full support, in particular Bishop Pabillo, Cardinal Rosales and the Archbishop of Lipa, Batangas, who had supported them in the past.

### 3. FRAME BRIDGING AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

#### *3.1 A church of the poor*

“The 1960 national census, the last one which listed religious affiliation, had 83.8 per cent identifying themselves as Roman Catholics[...]”, a number which Carroll (2004: 55) doubts has changed much over the course of the years, even though there has been a rise in number of smaller non-ecumenical sects. It follows that in a dominantly Catholic nation, the ability to mobilize resources through the church’s network of churches, schools, universities and organizations is of no little importance.

Prior to the Sumilao walk, it was not expected of the church to offer assistance in terms of space and issuing statements (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February). The church was already involved with the Sumilao farmers since 12 years before, when the local church in Cagayan de Oro was first approached by the farmers, but their involvement had previously mostly consisted of singing at masses, say mass for the hunger strikers and offer council (A.J. Ledesma 2009, interview 13 March; I.J. Chan-Gonzaga 2009, interview, 17 March). Very explicitly, I.J. Chan-Gonzaga (ibid) states: “We got involved in agrarian reform precisely because of Sumilao”; the walk opened up a new venue for support and resources from the church (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February).

A.J. Bag-ao (2009, interview, 18 February), executive trustee of BALAOD Mindanaw, says that during the groundwork focus was not on the church, but on other NGOs and farmers organizations that the farmers met with prior to the walk, asking to hold forums and for accommodation in the provinces that they would pass; “We never thought that the church will be very instrumental in making sure that we get to Manila safe”.

Involving the bishops was an initiative from the farmers who felt that the church had been supportive ever since the hunger strike.

Bishop Ledesma from the archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, the first major city in the walk, and Bishop Pacana from the diocese of Malaybalay, under which Sumilao belongs, are Jesuits and as such there was a Jesuit network that could facilitate the walk (A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February; I.J. Chan-Gonzaga 2009, interview, 17 March). I.J. Chan-Gonzaga (2009, interview, 17 March) explains: “by sheer affiliation and fraternal cooperation, we realized we have to be on top of this”.

The Jesuits’ networking had a motivational effect on how the planning proceeded during the walk as there emerged a sense of duty towards the church:

In fact, when they walked – they started the walk – they brought with them a tent thinking that there would be circumstances when they would sleep on the road. But when the Bishop heard about that plan, he said: “Oh, no, so we will contact other parishes and make sure that your route will be close to a church”. When you stop for the day, you’re closer to a church. That’s why sometimes we’d get there at 5 pm, or 6, or 7, or 9, or 11, because we wanted to come closer to a church although initially that was not the plan. We said, wherever we feel tired, we will stop, but because the bishops had already said: “Oh, the next Church said they already prepared dinner” so we had to, oh, move a little bit. So it was at least 40 km per day, but there were times when it was 35 or 56 depending on the proximity of the next, of the nearby parish who committed to provide food and shelter for the night.

A.J. Bag-ao 2009, interview, 18 February

When the Sumilao farmers reached Manila, they went straight to the church of the Gesù - located in the Ateneo de Manila University campus, where also the socio-political arm of the Jesuits, SLB, has their offices – where Cardinal Rosales said mass (I.J. Chan-Gonzaga 2009, interview, 17 March). I.J. Chan-Gonzaga (ibid) explains that the Cardinal’s involvement sent a signal to the church in general, not just the Jesuits, and, by quoting the Cardinal, that this became clear as the Cardinal stated: “This is a call to the religious and to the clergy. I have a letter here for the president that I want the farmers to hand carry to Malacañang and I want the seminarians and the sisters to make sure that the farmers reach the gates of Malacañang”. Consequently the church held a procession to Malacañang where, Chan-Gonzaga argues, that President Arroyo “had no choice but to accommodate precisely because of that”. The pressure the church

exercised on Malacañang led to a meeting between two of the farmer leaders and the President.

As a consequence of the church's acting on the Sumilao farmers' behalf, other farmer groups began approaching the church for support as well:

[T]hat's why this year all of a sudden all the other farmer groups thought we were the ones responsible and actually we're not. The only thing we were able to do was to bridge the farmers and the church and now that that's bridged, for me, we've done our part, but they always come back to us [...]. So at the same time we're trying to help and we're helping precisely because it is a mandate of the church.

I.J. Chan-Gonzaga 2009, interview, 17 March

In 1992, bishops and lay people held the Philippine Plenary Council of the Philippines II (PCB II), during which it was stated that the church would be a church of the poor, taking their needs in consideration and encourage the rich to share their resources with them (ibid). The PCB II is likened to Vatican II which, with the 1968 Bishop's Conference in Medellin, led to fundamental changes within the Catholic church (Kamrava & Mora 1998: 331-332; 337-338). In Latin America at the time, the adopted agenda for social justice by the church was conducive to the growth of civil society. It followed that development of grassroots neighborhood organizations, and consequent horizontal relationships within civil society, in Chile and Brazil in 1980 was facilitated by church involvement.

Between the mid-1940s until the beginning of the 1970s two developments occurred analogous to each other (Carroll 2004: 56-57). The Catholic church developed its programme on social justice and established through the Institute of Social Order church activity within social development. The other major Christian churches followed their example in the 1960s. Subsequent to the social justice agenda that followed Vatican II and the Bishop's Conference in Medellin was the emergence of liberation theology which in the Philippines served as inspiration, alongside writings of Mao and Professor

Jose Maria Sison<sup>12</sup>, for peasants, students and some Christians during the rise of the communist movement in the 1960s. The National Democratic Front (NDF) served as an umbrella for Maoist CSOs, such as the Christians for National Liberation (CNL), which was headed by a Catholic priest.

The engagement of the church in the local Sumilao farmers' case which developed into an engagement in the national CARPER issue was thus aided by an already existing social justice paradigm. A.J. Ledesma (2009, interview, 13 March) relates the conditions of the rural poor and landless to an identification by the church of these issues as social justice issues which need to be addressed and that this is a way for the church reiterate its position as a church of the poor. I.J. Chan-Gonzaga (2009, interview, 17 March) further highlights this by saying that: "this is for the first time the church was able to say that we are still pro-poor". There is a need for it as the major criticism against the Catholic church is that it has forgotten "how to mingle with the poor" and that it has "become too comfortable having dinner with politicians and landlords".

I.J. Chan-Gonzaga (ibid) argues that there is a need for asset reform in the Philippines in general and if agrarian reform can be properly implemented, other asset reforms will follow. Successful implementation of CARP in the Sumilao farmers' case concretized the urgency for this through the walk. The Sumilao campaign opened up for an educational process on agrarian reform within the church, between bishops, as the farmers managed to talk to a third of the dioceses in the country during the walk. This facilitated an opening up for discussions on the issue of CARP within the church because the farmers were not only bannered the local disputed 144 ha, but also CARPER. This consequently led to the provincial superior defending the call for agrarian reform at the Association of Major Religious Superiors.

### *3.2 Active Non-Violence*

Another factor that played an important part was the walk as a peaceful form of protest. Non-violent strategies had played an important part in the EDSA revolution, or People

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<sup>12</sup> Chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and founder of its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

Power revolution, that led to the ousting of President Marcos in 1986. Many of the social movement organizations as well as the bishops went through workshops in non-violent strategies during the processes that led to EDSA. This was to be contrasted with the strategies of the radical left.

After President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972, the church became divided into three camps (Carroll 2004: 57-58). Conservatives, who supported Marcos, amongst who the majority of the bishops was found along with congregation superiors and individual priests and nuns. Moderates, comprised of a minority of (many younger) bishops, the leadership of the Associations of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) and individual church people who felt that martial law was oppressive and impeding on development. Only a handful of religious authorities were linked to the radicals, those who joined the revolutionary left, consisting mostly of church people working in direct contact with the poor.

Apart from the tensions this caused within the church, it also affected relations with the state (Carroll 2004: 58-59). Bishops, who otherwise rejected the left, refused to expose their fellows to a military known for violating human rights. Likewise, moderate organizers would seek protection in rebel camps. Moderates and radicals often shared a background in common church-based training programmes which facilitated contact, however, it also made church programmes open to infiltration by the left. As a consequence the military would see any kind of organizers as potential communists. These tensions led the bishops to make an official stance of their own which resulted in a joint pastoral letter in February 1983, "A Dialogue for Peace", where they criticized the oppressive government and human rights violations on the parts of both the right and the left.

Following the assassination of Marcos-critic Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino in 1983, which was believed to have been staged by the government, protests steadily built and crystallized into two divisions (Carroll 2004: 61-62). The "yellow stream" which wanted a "parliamentary and reformist" solution to economic and political problems caused by the Marcos regime. This stream consisted mainly of leading people from the church and

businessmen close to it as well as those who were mobilized as a result of Aquino's murder. Many also sought social change to be achieved through non-violence. The "red stream" consisted of the organizations allied with the left, priests and church workers amongst them, and militant organizations of workers, peasants and urban poor; those disgruntled with the elites and the inability of the government to address fundamental socio-economic issues in society. These issues were to be resolved even through means of armed struggle.

Aiming for peaceful change, the "yellow stream" re-established the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and, with Cardinal Sin, urged participation in the 1984 National Assembly election (Carroll: 62-63). The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) took a neutral stance rather focusing on maintaining the elections honest. The "red stream" boycotted the elections. However, the opposition succeeded in mobilizing a high turnout of votes.

In 1986 the economic conditions and violence had escalated and President Marcos called for a snap election to gain mandate against a presumed fractioned opposition. Again, the "red stream" urged boycott<sup>13</sup>. NAMFREL was now backed by the CBCP, supporting the candidate Corazon "Cory" Aquino, the wife of the assassinated Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino. The election resulted in what was apparent massive fraud by the government and was publicly condemned by the CBCP. This positioning of the bishops upset not only President Marcos, but also the Vatican. Carroll (2004: 64) states that the bishops "situated themselves within the Christian community, not above it." They reported what they saw and asked people to, in a spirit of non-violence, to act upon it, respecting the individuals' agency regarding political choices. What followed, called on by Cardinal Sin, was the mass mobilizations that ousted Marcos. Carroll (2004: 54) attributes the non-violence practices taught in seminars by church-based active non-violence groups as conducive to the success of the mass mobilizations.

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<sup>13</sup> This was one key event that eventually led to a major split in the left in the early 1990s that reverberate throughout Philippine political society even today. A detailed account can be found in Rocamora (1994).

The concept of Active Non-Violence was introduced in the Philippines through a series of workshops in 1984 by John Gauz and Hildegard Gauz-Mayer from the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March). One workshop was held for the bishops and two for NGOs and SMOs. The movement *Aksyon Para sa Kapayapaan at Katarungan* (AKAP KA) was formed to combat injustice using Active Non-Violence (ANV) methods and principles.

I happened to be one of those who participated in that workshop. And I was convinced to the point that I left my previous organization to join that movement. Because I felt that [...] this is the movement to topple Marcos' dictatorship.

S. Banzuela 2009, interview, 5 March

In PAKISAMA's reading of events, the EDSA revolution did not just happen by people saying "Let's do this". In S. Banzuela's estimate "at least some 6000" people participated in AKAP KA workshops. One of them was Butch Aquino, the brother of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, who was leading one of the marches during the EDSA rallies.

Following the EDSA revolution PAKISAMA adapted ANV into its political education program, using the materials of AKAP KA. One of the participants in and trainers of ANV in the early 1990s was Peter Tuminghay, a farmer leader of MAPALAD, which is a member organization of PAKISAMA. This affected the outcome of the planning for the Sumilao farmers' campaign in 1997 when the initiative for a hunger strike came from Tuminghay instead of the community organizers suggestion to take up arms.

### *3.3 Frame bridging*

The processes that led to the conception and legitimization of the walk as form had consequences for how the Catholic church came to relate to the agrarian reform movement. Successful frame amplification personalized the issue and galvanized support from the Cardinal, and arguably other church people as well. The walk itself was also a method with which the farmers could educate on agrarian reform in the communities they passed and consequently led to educational processes within the church. The successful outcome inspired other farmer groups to seek support and resources from the church, a call they could not deny.



Aligning the agrarian reform frame with the church's already existent social justice frame, the motivational vocabulary that called the church to act can be translated as following:

- Severity

The church felt a need to improve upon its reputation as a church of the poor.

- Urgency

The urgency of the case translated into urgency for the church to act for it as it opened up an opportunity to show itself as a church of the poor.

- Efficacy

There was a Jesuit network to facilitate immediate action.

- Propriety

According to the social justice agenda introduced by Vatican II and the 1968 Bishop's Conference in Medellin and further developed for the Philippines in PCB II, it was the duty of the church to be pro-poor and to seek to resolve social justice issues. Agrarian reform addressed both issues of poverty alleviation and the right of land to the tiller.

The ANV frame was already shared by SMOs in the agrarian reform movement and members of the Catholic church since the mid-1980s. Considering that social movements differ the most in their methodologies - in how they address what needs to be done and how it is done - this study argues furthermore that frame bridging between the agrarian reform movement's agrarian reform frame and the church's social justice frame was facilitated by an intermediate frame, the shared ANV frame, that provided a common approach.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The Sumilao farmers' walk became a landmark event in the recent history of agrarian reform in the Philippines. As the campaign became a success story for implementing CARP, this study was interested in how social movement organizations mobilize for

action, how the actors related employed strategies to the outcome of the campaign and what the effects were on the agrarian reform movement.

The prognostic framing task, what needed to be done and what form the demonstration would take, was partly addressed bearing in mind that the Sumilao farmers had exhausted almost every option of expressing their situation after years of futile struggle for their lands. Furthermore, the prognostic framing task corresponded to parallel discursive and strategic processes. The Sumilao farmers' case was identified as being able to set a policy precedent for future land disputes and as such the campaign could punctuate, discursively highlight, the need for agrarian reform in general. As there was a need to invigorate agrarian reform as an issue, there was in the same fashion a frame transformation of the understanding of how to conduct a demonstration; the decision to walk was seen as being active and lively in itself and contrasted with the previous hunger strike in 1997 which was seen as a passive and self destructive. The frame transformation called for a new way of dramatizing the issue, a new frame amplification to reopen peoples' minds to the issue.

The motivational framing task, articulated as severity, urgency, efficacy and propriety, that moved people to act were the socio-economic context of the farmers, ongoing land conversion which would make the farm lands useless, the need for bystander support, and a sense of duty to retrieve their lands by physical action.

Getting the Church on board proved instrumental for the Sumilao campaign's success. The Church managed to provide a platform of political support for the farmers' cause and logistics for the 1700 km walk. Building bystander support was also facilitated by having the Church as an ally considering that Catholics constitute a large majority in the Philippines. The Sumilao campaign set in motion a process of consolidating support from the Church which would continue during subsequent farmers' campaigns and later the CARPER campaign.

This study argues that one of the key elements for the successful frame bridging between the agrarian reform frame and the Church's social justice frame, *i.e.* what

made interaction and cooperation possible, was an intermediate, shared, Active Non-Violence frame. Since the mid-1980s this methodology for executing demonstrations was shared by both SMOs in the agrarian reform movement and members of the Catholic Church. Arguably, this can underscore the importance of shared methodologies in frame bridging processes similar to how SMOs often differ from each other when it comes to the prognostic framing task.

The Sumilao campaign also facilitated the building and strengthening of horizontal relationships within civil society. However, there is a need to accelerate that capacity:

It's a bit slow probably because also the mass movement in general has suffered a decline and has needed to really pick up the slack. That decline has been part of an overall durability of the traditional political set-up because even though there have been periodic political crisis and then late last year, this unprecedented international financial crisis really calling into question many of the basic dominant economic premises and even some, on the side, political premises. The mass movement hasn't been strong enough to take advantage of the opening and present itself as an alternative on many key issues. The same for the agrarian reform movement and in general, parties like us who support them or support the whole democratization struggle [...]. So there's a greater capacity for networking on their part and our part but we have to accelerate it and really use the basis of unity which is the CARPER Bill, which is the fundamental concern for agrarian reform as a way to consolidate that networking even for the long-term and even for other related struggles all within that democracy rubric. So yeah, we have a lot of housekeeping to do and to do better.

R. Hontiveros 2009, interview, 27 February

The networking between SMOs that began during the Sumilao campaign thus continued with CARPER where the CARPER campaign in itself was an instrument to strengthen those ties.

June 6, 2009, the CARPER Bill was passed, extending funding for CARP another five years (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2009a). Further study could prove insightful if focusing on the relationship between collective action events and collective action, for example, how the Sumilao campaign affected the discourse on agrarian reform and the

implications it had for the subsequent mobilizations in March 2009 and the outcome of the CARPER bill.

It is likewise important to direct attention to continued human rights violations in the Philippines which often are directed at proponents of agrarian reform as it aims to disassemble the power structures of the landed elites. The same day CARPER was passed, Renato “Ka Rene” Peñas, a prominent farmer leader for the Sumilao farmers and recently elected vice-president of PAKISAMA, was ambushed and shot to death on his way home (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2009b).

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## APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

- Jane D. Capacio, executive director of KAISAHAN (NGO), KAISAHAN office, 18 February 2009
- Atty. Arlene J. Bag-ao, executive trustee of BALAOD Mindanaw (NGO), KAISAHAN office, 18 February 2009
- Atty. Aison S. Garcia, peasant unit coordinator of SALIGAN (NGO), SALIGAN office, 2 February 2009
- Ruperto Aleroza, chairman of PKSK (national federation of farmers), PKSK office, 23 February 2009
- Gerry Bulatao, chairman and executive of CAPP-SIAD (consortium of NGOs), CAPP-SIAD office, 23 February 2009
- Jaime Tadeo, farmers' representative to PARC (Presidential Agrarian Reform Committee), PARC office, 25 February 2009
- Congresswoman Risa Hontiveros, AKBAYAN Partylist Representative, AKBAYAN headquarters, 27 February 2009
- Socrates Banzuela, national coordinator of PAKISAMA (national federation of farmers), café Sweet Inspirations, 5 March 2009
- Archbishop Antonio J. Ledesma, Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, Bishop's residence, 13 March 2009
- Fr. I.J Chan-Gonzaga, S.J., executive director of SLB (Jesuit organization), SLB office, 17 March 2009