TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

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People Power:

The Everyday Politics of Democratic Resistance in Burma and the Philippines

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... the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could be only the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the never ending fight against terror and its relentless onslaughts, despite their personal afflictions, by all who, while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilences, strive their utmost to be healers.

Albert Camus, *The Plague*

This thesis is dedicated to all those who, resisting the terror of state violence, continue to do what has to be done.

Abstract

How do Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Burma and the Philippines participate in the construction of political legitimacy through their engagement in local and international politics? What can this tell us about the agency of non-state actors in international relations? This thesis explores the practices of non-state actors engaged in political resistance in Burma and the Philippines. The everyday dynamics of political legitimacy are examined in relation to popular consent, political violence, and the influence of international actors and norms. The empirical research in this thesis is based on a grounded theory analysis of in-depth semi-structured interviews with a wide cross-section of spokespeople and activists of opposition groups from Burma, and with spokespeople of opposition groups in the Philippines. The research covers community-based organisations with broad memberships, including women's organisations, student and youth groups, ethnic minority and indigenous groups, and trade unions. The thesis demonstrates that CBOs exercise a range of tactics in forming political relationships in local and international contexts, and emphasises the role of learning processes in the interaction of local and international norms in the course of political change.

Contents

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As my previous employer at the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, Ross Wilson's efforts in solidarity with Burmese trade unionists inspired my initial interest in the politics of this region. I am grateful for Ross's support of my involvement in projects to build links between the Burmese and New Zealand unions, and the supportive interest he has shown in my work since.

I am grateful to Rod Prosser who made use of his extensive networks in and knowledge of the Philippines to assist me in setting up my fieldwork there. I was often aware during my visit that the trust and goodwill that was shown towards me was due to his endorsement of me.

Figure 1: Map of Burma.
Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

Figure 2: Map of the Philippines.
Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

Introduction

'People power' is a phrase that evokes images of sudden and dramatic political change – mass demonstrations in the streets of major cities, opposition leaders addressing the crowds, the crumbling of regimes that had previously seemed unassailable. These are the images of people power through which domestic political struggles become global events, broadcast by international news media, and eliciting public comment and even intervention by international political elites. In this mediated political narrative, people power movements of the kind that have challenged or toppled regimes in Burma and the Philippines appear to outside observers as sudden ruptures in the normal processes of international politics. International relations theories that have attempted to explain such events have tended to accept this representation and have sought explanations at the level of the international system for the vulnerability of domestic political elites and the potential for political change. Other academic studies of people power have reversed this approach, focussing on domestic structures of political opportunity as the primary explanatory framework. The purpose of this thesis is to show the links between political processes taking place in local and international contexts, starting with a focus on community based organisations (CBOs).

People power, by which we mean mass mobilisations that attempt to overthrow a state regime[1], emerges out of the kind of political interactions which have not traditionally been considered the stuff of international relations. Yet the intended results of people power, regime change and/or broader reconfigurations of the constitutional basis of states, are core concerns of international relations theory and practice. Theories of International Relations that operate mainly at the level of the international system struggle to account for the emergence and spread of people power movements, even though participants share resources and information across national borders, and processes of political change may spread across regions. IR theory was famously unable, for instance, to predict or fully

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[1] The term is used here without presumptions as to the type of mobilisation, political content or tactics involved. People power movements may incorporate political violence or non-violence, and a range of political ideas and motivations not necessarily confined to Western understandings of democratic or progressive ideology. The type and content of political activity that contributes to popular challenges to a given regime is a matter for empirical study.

account for the people power movements that contributed to the fall of the Eastern European communist regimes (Lebow 1994, Wohlforth 1998). This failing of IR theory cannot be entirely explained by the inherent contingency and complexity of the social forces at play in such events. The focus of IR theory on the elite level of inter-state politics has tended at times to obscure the development of political processes by which ordinary people organise to challenge the state. The central puzzle animating this thesis is to explain how relatively weak non-state actors have been able at times to organise in ways that overpower state regimes.

For participants and close observers, periods of revolutionary upheaval come as the culmination of long processes of political work to lay the groundwork for change. Although political activists may not be able to predict the timing of events which set off processes of regime change, they are able to offer insights into the social relations which shape the course of political change when it does occur. The research presented in this thesis is therefore based on the working hypothesis that activists in CBOs can offer valuable insight into the process and progress of people power. The central research question focuses on the issue of political legitimacy as a lens for understanding the motivations and forms of agency of CBOs challenging state power:

- How do Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Burma and the Philippines participate in the construction of political legitimacy through their engagement in local and international politics? What can this tell us about the agency of non-state actors in international relations?

This thesis situates the study of people power within an IR framework, based on the observation that opposition groups in local contexts are engaged in international activist networks and participate directly in the processes of international politics. This thesis makes three primary contributions which address gaps in the IR literature on people power movements. First, the thesis presents a detailed account of the emergence of people power movements and their processes of organising. Second, the empirical research presented shows that the contestation and construction of political legitimacy are key to this process. Third, the thesis argues that, contrary to common understandings of international norms as diffusing from the top down, the results of the research presented here point to the norms of political legitimacy being produced primarily in the interaction of Community Based

Organisations with the everyday politics of local communities.

People power movements matter for international relations in three significant ways. First, because they can lead to revolutionary situations in which state regimes are overthrown and new regimes, even new states, emerge. Second, because they provoke reactions from states, both within a country and internationally as foreign governments position themselves in relation to challenges to a regime. Third, because participants in people power movements forge their own international relations as they seek to mobilise support for their causes. This thesis focuses on the latter point, highlighting the agency and social relations of non-elite actors, while also presenting the results of the research in terms of the potential for non-state agency to effect change at the level of the state and international state system.

Studying people power could be approached from a number of different directions based on the established literature in International Relations. Some have emphasised the role of international actors in enabling 'grassroots' political opposition campaigns (whether the international actors include global civil society organisations or international institutions such as the United Nations) (see Keck and Sikkink 1998). In this approach the international is elevated above the domestic in terms of the relative priority and importance of political actors and types of political actions. Others have focussed more on domestic aspects of elite politics, assessing the effectiveness of different forms of political opposition in oppressive regimes (Lyall 2006). Such studies concentrate primarily on identifying variables that determine the success of the alternative political strategies used by elite non-state actors. Other approaches work with existing 'grand narratives' of political transition while examining how particular cases fit within the assumed parameters of change. In this vein, scholars have sought to understand why remaining authoritarian regimes in Asia have yet to undergo a 'democratic transition' (Dukalskis 2009; cf. Rodan 1996, 3), or, more generally, how authoritarian regimes (as well as oppressive 'democratic' regimes) are able to maintain their grip on power (see Geddes and Zaller 1989; cf. Hale 2006). While the engagement with particular cases draws out contingent factors specific to each context, such approaches assume a teleological end-point for political change whereby all countries will, sooner or later, undergo democratisation (usually conceived simply in terms of competitive elections). None of these approaches are appropriate for our present purposes, since the research puzzle addressed in this thesis is concerned with the agency of non-elite groups in circumstances where the timing and chances of success of democratic change are far from assured. To address people power in terms of IR theory there is also a need to explain not only the specific phenomena of popular mobilisation, but also the relationship

of these phenomena to international politics and to existing theories of IR.

Realist theories of IR treat states as the primary units of analysis. By Realist accounts, the political environment within which opposition groups emerge is determined primarily by the sovereign actions of states, in both the domestic and international spheres of politics. The emergence of people power movements might be treated from a Realist perspective as a risk to the survival of established state regimes (Rotberg 2002), analysed as a factor in international conflict (Schultz 1998) or seen in terms of the foreign policy objectives of rival states (Eizenstat, Stuart and Porter 2005). In any case, a Realist perspective on people power would focus on the capacity of the state to contain and resist challenges to its sovereign authority. The prospect of successful mobilisations of people power is therefore associated in the Realist paradigm with the idea of 'failed' or 'weak' states (Eizenstat, Stuart and Porter 2005; Rotberg 2002). The rhetoric of the 'failed state' draws on the Realist assumption that the preservation and security of the state is the ultimate task of politics and a moral goal equivalent to the 'national interest' (Donnelly 2000, 164). Realists may therefore fear the collapse of undemocratic regimes since, as Robert Kaplan (2006) put it in *The Washington Post*, they see dictators as 'sit[ting] over a cauldron of anarchy'. Kaplan's rather hyperbolic description reflects an image of politics that is common to the Realist tradition, in which non-state actors are seen solely in terms of the threat they may pose to the stability and security of states.

Neo-realist theories of International Relations place more emphasis on the international system (e.g. Waltz 1959; 1979) but still focus on states as the central actors and have little more to offer to an analysis of non-state agency in international relations. For Neo-realists, the most salient feature of international politics is the 'anarchic' nature of relations between states, in which there is no over-arching authority able to impose order. Neo-realist theory as espoused by Waltz aims to transcend the considerations of individual and domestic politics to focus on the 'third image' of the anarchic international system. The neo-realist approach would therefore exclude the entirety of the empirical research presented in this thesis as being unimportant for understanding international politics. Against neo-realism, and other theories of IR which focus attention exclusively at the level of the international system, this thesis argues that the emergence of people power movements is both significant within the study of IR and unable to be explained solely through reference to interactions between states or other features of the international system.

The limits of Realist and neo-Realist approaches to studying people power are clear. While Realist perspectives can be used to understand the potential impact of people power

on state regimes, and even used to argue in favour of regime change[2], Realism is unable to shed much light on the processes by which people power movements are formed.

Liberal theories of IR share a concern with issues of democracy and human rights that would at least put people power movements on the research agenda. However, Liberal theories of IR share many of the state-centric assumptions of Realist approaches, often differing only in the extent to which states are assumed capable of cooperation in pursuit of collective interests and normative goals. Liberal Internationalism lies on a continuum between Realism and Cosmopolitanism in the degree of cooperation it allows for in international affairs (McGrew 2002), but this cooperation is understood almost exclusively as between state actors. While liberal internationalism as a theory of IR places emphasis on liberal values such as democracy and human rights, progress towards such goals is seen as requiring the leadership of western liberal states (Gardner 1990). This is where the grand narrative of liberal internationalism blurs into the subfield of democratisation studies, in which political developments towards democracy are seen as following a liberal teleology defined and championed by the West and international institutions (Petersen 2008).

Where the political organisations described in this thesis are concerned with furthering processes of democratisation and human rights protection, however these terms are defined in local contexts, there is considerable overlap with the core research agenda of Liberal IR. The empirical results presented in this thesis are particularly pertinent to the study of democratisation, which has emerged as a distinct specialisation within Liberal theories of IR. The bottom-up model of non-state international relations that emerges in this thesis is however alien to the Liberal focus on the spread of universal values at the international level, primarily through the agency of states.

The neo-Liberal variant of IR theory (e.g. Keohane 1984; Keohane and Nye 1971) shares with the neo-Realist approach a focus on the international system which precludes consideration of the close connections between community-based organisations in local and international contexts portrayed in this thesis. Neo-liberal approaches to IR are concerned with the operation of international institutions and actors in ways that broaden the scope of IR theory to include consideration of international political economy as well as the potential for international cooperation between states. Integrating the political agency of community-based non-state actors into understandings of the evolution of the

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[2] For an example of Realist arguments for regime change in Burma, see the Tutu-Havel report (DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary 2005). This document, prepared with the terms of reference of the UN security council in mind, seeks to make a case that the situation of repression and conflict in Burma constitutes a threat to regional peace and stability (i.e. to the security of states in the region), due to the spread of refugees, narcotics trafficking and disease to surrounding countries.

international system has not been a concern of Liberal or neo-Liberal IR theories however, which remain focussed on the interaction of elite actors in the international system.

It seems at first that constructivist theories of IR would be more promising for studying people power movements. Constructivism after all is concerned primarily with the role of social agency and interaction in shaping the foundations of political life. In the particular variant of Constructivism to be found within IR theory however, there is both a focus on state actors and a privileging of explanatory models located at the elite levels of the international system. In the mainstream of Constructivist theory associated with the work of Wendt (1992), states are explicitly identified as the sole actors and units of analysis in IR. This 'Conventional Constructivism' (Hopf 1998) is presented as an alternative set of analytical tools to engage with the same problems of predicting and explaining state behaviour dealt with by realist and liberal forms of IR theory. Other versions of constructivism include non-state actors within a focus on the emergence of norms within the international system. The results of this thesis speak directly to the constructivist concern with norms of political legitimacy in the foundation and exercise of state sovereignty. In arguing that political legitimacy is grounded in the interactions of community-based organisations with the everyday politics of local communities however, the thesis departs from the explanatory framework of Constructivist IR theory.

Constructivists have tended to take a structuralist approach to questions of both political agency and international norms, assuming that political legitimacy operates at the level of an international normative structure (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 403). While political actors, usually states, are seen as having a role in constructing norms through processes of interaction, the structure of international norms is seen as the intervening force through which actors are able to act on others and through which legitimacy may be contested or conferred. For instance, Reus-Smit argues that 'constitutional structures' can be discerned at the foundation of international society, 'comprising the constitutive values that define legitimate statehood and rightful state action' (1997, 558). For Reus-Smit, these normative structures of legitimacy are formed through relational processes in that the values that define legitimacy are negotiated in a Habermasian process of communicative action by states at the international level. However, once established as norms, these values are seen as taking on a structural role, alongside norms of sovereignty and procedural justice. The role of relational processes, including non-state agency, in defining norms of state legitimacy is therefore restricted to the original establishment of a normative structure. For mainstream constructivists like Reus-Smit, it is still relations between states that are seen as decisive, with non-state actors playing at best an auxiliary role.

Even when non-state actors are included in the analysis, Constructivism in IR generally subscribes to a 'trickle down' theory of norm diffusion from the international to the domestic levels of politics. Non-state agents have been seen by constructivists as playing a role in setting agendas and mobilising campaigns that influence international norms of state behaviour and legitimacy (Price 1995; Klotz 1995; Epstein 2008). The first phase of constructivist theorising in IR during the 1990s supplemented the dominant focus on state agency in the discipline with consideration of non-state agency to the extent that it could effect changes in norms at the inter-state level. Studies such as those by Klotz (1995) on the norm of racial equality in the anti-apartheid campaign and by Price (1995) on the 'chemical weapons taboo' showed how non-state actors could influence international norms. As mainstream constructivist theorists have become more interested in non-state agency, the idea of norm diffusion, applied originally to explain convergence in state behaviour, has been applied to consider the influence of international norms on the behaviour of non-state actors (see Cortell and Davis 2000). The danger in these mainstream constructivist approaches is that by introducing a structure of international norms as an autonomous intervening force, non-state actors are reduced to one of two roles: either instrumental actors seeking changes in international norms or as the passive recipients of international norm diffusion at the domestic level. In other words, the theoretical framework of an international normative structure mirrors that of public choice theory, with non-state actors cast in the role of interest groups and norms as a proxy for international policy. Some constructivist scholars have found innovative ways around the limitations in this approach, such as Keck and Sikkink's (1998, 221) "boomerang" model of transnational advocacy, whereby NGOs in an oppressive state work with NGOs in other states to persuade governments and international organisations to put pressure on the home government. But the emphasis on such forms of action highlights the extent to which mainstream constructivism brackets out the agency of non-state actors unless it involves direct interaction with states or international organisations.

Constructivist approaches have found common ground with critical theorists who emphasise the constitutive relations between knowledge and power in international relations (Price and Reus-Smit 1998). While some have argued that critical theories of IR share a commitment to a post-positivist epistemology (Lapid 1989), others have pointed out that there is more that divides than unites the theorists grouped under this label (Biersteker 1989). Critical theorists have nonetheless contributed to a relational view of power and non-state agency by opening the state-centric mainstream of IR theory to critique from broader political theory (Walker 1993). One form that this critical approach

has taken is the application of post-structuralist theory to the study of the role which both state and non-state actors play in shaping the discursive practices of international relations. Critical theories also offer some alternative paths to the study of people power and community based organisations in international relations. A notable example is provided by Bleiker (2000) whose study of popular revolt in the former East Germany utilises a discursive framework based around the concept of 'transversal dissent' (Bleiker 2000, 9-14)[3]. For Bleiker, 'A transversal interpretation ... implies that practices of dissent in global politics should be viewed in discursive terms' (Bleiker 2000, 35) particularly concerned with the politics of language and 'poetic dissent' (Bleiker 2000, 43). Similarly, Epstein (2008) has used a Foucauldian approach to study the influence of NGOs in shaping anti-whaling discourse, showing how discursive processes are constitutive as well as expressive of the political legitimacy of certain practices. In focusing on the power of language to construct meaning, however, such studies tend to elide the role of non-linguistic elements of social practice and material reality within discourse. Language itself is a practice which engages with the performance of other social practices (Austin 1975) and takes place in a material world in which real objects and events are elements alongside words in the discursive construction of meaning (Wittgenstein 1969, Badiou 2007). The primary contribution of critical theories of discourse in international relations is to draw attention to the constitutive power relations which permeate social practice, of which linguistic practice is one aspect.

The theory of norm diffusion is a key aspect of constructivist accounts of international relations which must be addressed by any critical engagement with constructivism. Norms define both what is normal and what is normative in a particular situation. To be accepted as a norm, a standard of behaviour must meet expectations of both normality and normativity, reflecting both general practice and accepted values. Although this definition of norms is compatible with common usage in International Relations theory the influence of constructivism has led many scholars who study norms to emphasise the normative over the normal, putting the focus on ideas rather than practices (Checkel 1997; 1998).

Constructivists like Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, 888) associate the rising interest in norms in IR theory with an 'ideational turn' in the discipline and define a norm as 'a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity' (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891). The focus on appropriateness certainly captures part of the power of norms

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[3] Bleiker follows Ashley's (1989, 270) interpretation of the term 'transversal' to refer to political processes that cross international borders. For a broader reading of Foucault's political theory which emphasises the concept of the transversal see Deleuze (2006, 20).

although, as will be argued in the next chapter, compliance with norms may be based as much on consequences or habit as on value-based legitimacy. The requirement for a shared identity claimed by Finnemore and Sikkink, however, seems to set the mark too high for the successful adoption of a norm. While some degree of connection to shared values is clearly needed for a norm to become established, this can be negotiated in a given situation without the actors involved necessarily sharing a single identity.

As Acharya (2004, 242) argues, most paths to norm acceptance in local contexts lie partway between complete congruence with international norms and outright rejection. This formulation bears a striking similarity to Scott's description of the political terrain 'between quiescence and revolt' and suggests a role for everyday politics in explaining the process of norm localisation. Acharya's (2004, 248) account of this process emphasises local initiative and agency in 'borrowing' ideas and practices from outside in ways that amplify particular aspects of existing social relations and processes of normative change. For instance, as Gurowitz's (1999) study of migrant workers' activism in Japan shows, international norms are localised by subordinate groups in support of their political claims and campaigns. In other words, political activism situated in local contexts involves the negotiation of international and everyday norms.

As will be argued in Chapter Five, everyday normative change occurs through learning processes which reconfigure the expectations, habitual practices and conceptual framing of actors. Constructivist accounts of international normative change have described learning process in the adoption of norms, but have tended to focus on the role of international actors as 'teachers' of norms (Finnemore 1993; see also Florini 1996; Reimann 2006). The approach in this thesis complements the attention such theorists have paid to the elite politics of international norms with a focus on the agency of everyday actors in determining their own priorities and processes of learning. A perspective that takes account of everyday politics adds a significant piece to the puzzle of explaining the dynamics of elite politics, as well as raising new questions based on the politics of non-elite communities.

Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. The next chapter outlines the research process I followed in the preparation of this thesis, from the design of the project, through the fieldwork and analysis, to the formulation of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guided the writing of the finished product. Chapter Two introduces the first detailed discussion of the empirical material presented here, showing how CBOs in Burma and the Philippines engage in the production of political legitimacy in local contexts. The main argument advanced in this chapter is that CBOs not only challenge and contest state

legitimacy, they are actively involved in projects of political legitimacy on similar terms to those of state regimes. Chapter Three addresses the specific relationships between CBOs and state regimes in Burma and the Philippines, again addressing the issue through the lens of political legitimacy and the motivations of participants in CBOs for contesting state legitimacy and engaging in resistance. The argument here is not only that state regimes lose legitimacy when they engage in oppression and fail to provide public goods, but that the political activities of CBOs play an important role in the social production of state legitimacy and, conversely, in its loss. Chapter Four engages more directly with the question of how non-state actors exercise agency in challenging state regimes, through a discussion of the politics of violence and non-violence among CBOs. In this chapter I argue, contrary to prevailing views of civil society as a space of non-violence, that CBOs exercise a range of tactics, including both armed and non-armed forms of resistance, in pursuit of popular legitimacy, and that there is evidence of armed and non-armed groups being able to work cooperatively as part of movements for political change. Chapter Five deals with the political importance of education and learning processes for the CBOs involved in this research. I argue that consideration of the dynamics of political learning in organisations engaged in both local and international contexts can provide insight into the process of international normative change. Contrary to top-down models of norm diffusion I demonstrate how local actors exercise agency in evolving their own forms of political practice through various forms of learning and change, including the selective incorporation of international norms. Chapter Six focuses further on the international relationships formed by CBOs from Burma and the Philippines, investigating the motivations of local groups for engaging in international connections. I argue that, although it is often in the interests of CBOs to learn the particular skills necessary to engage in international networking, lobbying and fundraising, these learning processes are as unequal as the wider terrain of international politics. Rather than advance an argument that Western organisations are engaging in cultural imperialism in their relations with CBOs in developing countries, I argue that CBOs are exercising agency in pursuing their own priorities and interests in international settings, and that in order to do so they must engage in processes of unequal learning.

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The Research Process

The aim of this chapter is to make visible the process that was followed in the research presented in this thesis.

I began my doctoral research with an interest in international activism. I had been involved in political organising for several years, initially within student groups protesting rising tuition costs and then within anti-capitalist[4] and anti-war movements. I was particularly interested in the connections between these movements in Western countries and the ongoing social struggles taking place in Asia and Latin America. From loose coalitions like Peoples' Global Action, which came out of the Zapatista encuentros, to more institutionalised forms such as the Asian Students' Association, I became aware of how movements in the 'global south' were taking on leadership roles in the coordination of globalised resistance.

My awareness of the struggle for political change in Burma was deepened through contact with Burmese trade unionists while I was working for the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. The NZCTU had hosted a Burmese trade unionist in Wellington for several months and when he returned to continue his organising work with Burmese migrants on the Thai-Burma border it was decided that the New Zealand unions would try to help raise funds from NZAID to support this effort. With support from NZAID I travelled to the Thai-Burma border and discussed this possibility with the leadership of the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB), and with Burmese migrant workers and union activists from a range of industries on the border. I heard the experiences of migrants who had come to Thailand fleeing persecution and poverty in their homeland, and I learned about the broad network of political organisations representing the diverse ethnic nationalities of Burma, who were working in various ways to challenge the authority of the military regime ruling the country. I was struck by both the determined efforts of Burmese activists to achieve political change within their home country, and their eagerness to find ways of working internationally to raise support and awareness.

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[4] There has of course never been a unified anti-capitalist movement. I am referring here to the organisation of globally co-ordinated protests against the summits of the International Financial Institutions as well as a

When I began work on my proposed doctoral research I realised that the activism of the Burmese groups would make an ideal case study for a project investigating the agency of non-state actors in international relations. Not only was Burma an under-researched area, and the activism of Burmese opposition groups even more so, but there were several aspects of the political activity I had observed that seemed to challenge the prevailing assumptions in the literature I was reading on global civil society and transnational social movements. Where the literature often assumed a western liberal basis for global civil society, the Burmese organisations appeared to be operating in a more culturally hybrid political space. Where the literature assumed that global civil society was a space of non-violence, the Burmese organisations often carried arms or cooperated with armed groups for protection in areas of civil conflict. Perhaps most strikingly, where the literature spoke of a kind of social globalisation, characterised as an opening up of global public spaces, Burmese activists spoke of their profound difficulties in travelling and communicating in spaces regulated by foreign legal and linguistic codes.

My interest in studying Burmese activism in local and international contexts was primarily as a case study that could illuminate wider issues in the study of global civil society. In discussing the research design with my supervisors it was decided that adding a second case study would help to demonstrate which of the insights generated from the case study could be generalised more broadly, as well as to identify aspects that were specific to particular conditions in one of the cases. On reflection, the Philippines was identified as a country with enough in common with Burma historically to enable comparison, while with enough differences to make such a comparison worthwhile. As George and Bennett (2005, 18) argue, the use of case studies for research in political science is strongest when methods combine analysis within cases with comparison between a small number of cases. Including research participants from the Philippines as well as Burma ensures that the results of the study cannot be simply dismissed as applying only to an extreme or outlier case.

As case studies of political resistance in Asia, Burma and the Philippines might at first glance seem to represent rather unusual case selections. One is formally democratic and the other strictly authoritarian, even to the extent that Burma is usually lumped in by the United States and its allies with a small number of 'pariah' regimes under the 'rogue state' label (cf. Homolar 2011). Moreover, the Philippines is the oldest independent democratic state in Asia (dating from 1946, although the country's democratic rule was interrupted during the Marcos period from 1972 to 1987), while Burma is one of a small number of Asian countries that have not experienced at least some degree of democratisation in recent

revival of anti-capitalist protests on May Day.

decades (Reilly 2006, 29-35). However, Burma and the Philippines both represent societies that are fragmented by sharp lines of political conflict between different social groups, have a high degree of ethnic heterogeneity, and continue to struggle with economic underdevelopment, a high level of income inequality, and high poverty rates (although the Philippines economy far outperforms the Burmese economy, as is discussed further in subsequent chapters). Each country gained formal independence from colonial rulers at almost the same time (1946 in the Philippines, and 1948 in Burma), and each has experienced multiple examples of broad-based political opposition movements during the post-colonial period of independence. In short, both country cases therefore have a long history of political resistance and popular mobilisation against 'illegitimate' rulers.

My interest was particularly in organisations based on organising large memberships in grassroots communities since it was these organisations that seemed to differ most from the prevailing stereotype of the professionalised international non-government organisation (NGO). In moving between local and international contexts these community based organisations (CBOs) came into frequent contact with the more recognisable kind of NGO, but also maintained their primary purpose and structure as mass organisations representing and organising particular sectors of the population. To cover the major CBOs operating within the diverse communities on the Thai-Burma border and in the Philippines I chose four sectors to focus on: ethnic organisations, women's groups, youth and student groups, and trade unions or workers' organisations.

Community Based Organisations (CBOs)

CBOs are particularly involved in everyday (non-elite, informal) politics, since they are based in particular non-elite communities and are actively involved in the informal politics of those communities. At the same time as they are involved in the everyday politics of their communities as activists and organisers, members of CBOs are able to mobilise their collective agency to engage with elite politics. This dual function is discussed by Appadurai (2001) in his study of an alliance of CBOs formed by communities of the urban poor in Mumbai. He describes the operation of the alliance as an example of 'deep democracy' because of the commitment of activists to 'build on what the poor themselves know and understand' (Appadurai 2001, 29). By situating themselves within the everyday politics of their base communities while focusing on building collective strength, and by maintaining a strategic approach to engaging with elites without being co-opted by any particular apparatus of elite politics, CBOs are able to constitute a non-elite democratic force.

However, translating between everyday and elite forms of politics is fraught with difficulties for CBOs. As Appadurai (2001, 28-9) makes clear, the process of building

democratic engagement at the level of everyday politics requires a 'politics of patience' to negotiate the contradictions of non-elite social relations as well as the impacts of elite forms of coercion and co-optation. There is no assurance that such a project will succeed or even that, given strong incentives for co-optation, leaders of CBOs will even maintain the goal of autonomy from elite politics. In this regard, Marwell's (2004) study of CBOs in New York shows the conflicts and pressures introduced by policies of devolution and privatisation of state welfare functions. As CBOs become reliant on state funding they are drawn into the formal structures of bureaucratic control associated with contracts for service delivery (Marwell 2004, 272-4). Dependency on state contracts and funding also creates strong incentives for CBOs to integrate themselves into what Marwell (2004, 277-9) calls 'machine politics', mobilising volunteers and constituencies of voters for politicians in exchange for continued support.

The political space in which CBOs operate is stratified by status, style, and scale. In terms of their primary function, CBOs are located at the intersection of the local and the everyday within a political space that stretches from local to international in scale, from informal to formal in style, and from subordinate to elite in status. In choosing strategies of political engagement, community-based actors navigate this political space in a variety of ways. Members of CBOs engage horizontally with non-elites in other regions through informal activities such as learning exchanges, as well as through more formal processes of coalition-building (see Chapter 6). CBOs also engage vertically with elite politics at national and international levels to gain support, raise awareness, and lobby for change. Kenis' (2000, 129-30) analysis of the role of CBOs in the global response to AIDS gives a good example of how the dynamics of both horizontal and vertical internationalisation can interact and evolve over time. Organisations first formed locally within communities affected by AIDS and then established networks with each other to exchange information and experience. As elite actors in government and international organisations began to recognise the need to respond to the crisis, CBOs combined to engage with the formalised, elite, and international politics of the global response in an attempt to ensure that the interests of affected communities were represented in the process (Kenis 2000, 130-2).

Methodology

The choices I made in structuring my fieldwork research and subsequent analysis were closely linked to my interest in the motivations as well as agency of community based organisations. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews and to ask initially open-ended questions in order to gain insight into the terms in which participants in CBOs chose to present their activities to an outside observer, as well as the activities themselves. In guiding

the interview towards the general themes of my research, I was particularly interested in how spokespeople and activists for the organisations would characterise and justify their priorities for collective action and relationship-building. Semi-structured interviews allow for participants to voice their experiences in their own words, as well as identify issues of importance to them (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2010, 102).

In structuring the research process I was aware that the specific terminology and theoretical framing of my research interests would not necessarily correspond to the terms in which my participants would discuss the same issues. I wanted to make space in the interviews and in the process of analysis for a dialogue between my own concepts and those of participants. Also, and most crucially, I wanted to allow the conceptual frameworks that were implicit in the statements made by participants to emerge through the overall process of the research, without relying on such concepts being fully and explicitly stated by participants. For instance, the way that the concept of state legitimacy is developed and used in this thesis draws on numerous disparate statements made by participants in various contexts, from descriptions of anti-government protest action to discussions of everyday resentment of abuses by government agents, and at varying degrees of abstraction, from particular personal experiences to general judgements about what a government ought to do. I saw the process of drawing connections between the data provided by participants as being my key role as a researcher, requiring both close listening and analytical distance.

The research processes I adopted, and the strategies of analysis in particular, were drawn from the model of Grounded Theory developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). As a method of qualitative theory-building, Grounded Theory offers a process of coding interview data and assessing emergent themes. While I borrowed the coding process developed by Strauss and Corbin, I took a more flexible approach to the identification of conceptual structures from the data than that proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998, 181-5), who provide a 'conditional/consequential matrix' as a heuristic device for ordering qualitative data. Strauss and Corbin's symbolic interactionist approach, based heavily in 'objectivist' assumptions about the interpretation of data, has been challenged by 'constructivist' practitioners of Grounded Theory such as Charmaz (2006, 129-135). Without fully embracing the particular variant on constructivist theory followed by Charmaz, I agree with the argument she makes that Grounded Theory is best understood as a process of interpreting meaning in context rather than revealing objective truth about the data (Charmaz 2003, 277). I therefore took a pragmatic approach to adopting certain aspects of methodological procedure from Strauss and Corbin while remaining sensitive to

the interpretivist concerns raised by Charmaz.

A strength of the Grounded Theory research design adopted in this study is that it allows for direct and detailed comparisons to be made between the two case studies on the basis of qualitative data. The coding process allows for similarities and differences in the cases to be identified across a wide range of thematic categories emerging from the interviews. The ease with which Grounded Theory allows comparisons based on qualitative data is especially important for research involving Burma, where reliable aggregates of quantitative data are rarely available and official data is lacking, restricted or unreliable[5]. The piecemeal availability of published data for at least one of the cases made the qualitative design of the study preferable to quantitative or mixed-methods approaches. However, where statistics and information from independent agencies and researchers are available, these are used where appropriate to supplement and contextualise the data provided by interview participants.

Grounded theory also has the advantage for the present study of facilitating an engagement with the everyday politics and forms of expression of the participants. Everyday politics consists of the informal activities of non-elite actors which affect norms of authority, allocation, and association. This definition includes the hidden forms of everyday resistance focused on by Scott (1985, 1990) and Kerkvliet (2005, 2009), as well as extending some way into the considerably broader arena of subordinate political action covered by Hobson and Seabrooke (2007). There are two key aspects of this definition which distinguish everyday politics from other forms of politics. Firstly, everyday politics is *non-elite*. It is the politics of those who, without access to the political shortcuts of power and privilege, must rely on their own individual and collective efforts to make their way. It is distinguished from elite politics which involves the practices that Foucault (1991; 2009) termed discipline and governmentality, and the perspective that Scott (1998) has called 'seeing like a state'. While elite politics is concerned with the definition and control of populations, everyday politics consists of practices that occur within a population but elude the formal definition and control of elites. This brings us to the second aspect of the definition: everyday politics is *informal*. It consists of political action which is not codified in terms of either state sanction or organisational rules (Helmke and Levitsky 2004, 727). It is the politics of the everyday in the sense described by Blanchot (1993, 239) as 'the suspect

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[5] On the unreliability of official economic statistics issued by the Government of Myanmar see Matthews (2006, 221). Foreign governments including Australia and the United States have also commented on the unreliability of official statistics from Burma (USA Department of State 2010; Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2011). Since the data routinely published by international agencies such as the IMF, World Bank, and other UN agencies is reliant on information supplied by state

(and the oblique) that always escapes the clear decision of the law'.

Everyday politics is everywhere, but it is not everything. A focus on everyday politics is not sufficient to explain all political processes and outcomes, or to account for major changes in international political orders. Neither can a focus on everyday politics ignore the material capacity of state elites and the agenda-setting power of formal institutions at national and international levels. The claim made in focusing the analytical framework of this thesis on everyday politics is a more modest one: that a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of political legitimacy and resistance requires consideration of the political activities of non-elites in informal settings. In the following chapters, the organisations which are the focus of this thesis will be shown to be acting as bridges between the everyday politics of their base communities and the elite, formal politics of the institutions within which the organisations represent the interests of their members.

The research process described by Grounded Theory offers a useful approach to the study of everyday politics which are by definition obscured from straightforward analysis. Symbolic forms of everyday resistance are, for Scott (1990), codified by 'hidden transcripts' which are intelligible to the peers of subordinate actors while contributing to the opacity of everyday politics for outsiders and elites.[6] Scott's concept of hidden transcripts implies more than just a practical difficulty in interpreting subversive action by non-elite actors. Such acts of resistance are not hidden because they are conducted out of sight of authorities. Rather, the meaning of subversive acts may be hidden from authorities because they do not share the 'practical epistemology' (Sidnell 2005) that everyday actors rely on for the intelligibility of their acts of resistance. Thus, even when there is no particular need to hide an act of resistance from an outside observer, it may not be an entirely straightforward process to render hidden transcripts legible. Grounded theory helps with this act of interpretation and translation, where participants are willing to share information about their practices of resistance, without relying on participants doing all the work required to make their practice legible to outsiders.

Defining everyday politics in terms of informal actions also excludes some of what

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parties, these sources suffer from the same problem of unreliability with regard to Burma.

[6] Similarly, Kerkvliet limits everyday politics to 'quiet, mundane, and subtle expressions and acts that are rarely organised or direct' (Kerkvliet 2009, 232).In making this limitation, Kerkvliet excludes what he calls official politics and advocacy politics, meaning any activity undertaken within or in interaction with an organisation of any kind, whether it is a state, peasant association, or trade union. In this sense, the definition of everyday politics used for this thesis is broader than that used by Kerkvliet. However, the definition adopted here is perhaps narrower in its specific focus on non-elite agency than his suggestion that the concept of everyday politics applies equally well to the actions of poor peasants as to the private actions of those in 'authoritative positions in universities and other organisations' (Kerkvliet 2009, 241).

Hobson and Seabrooke mean by everyday political action, which they define as:

> *acts by those who are subordinate within a broader power relationship but, whether through negotiation, resistance or non-resistance, either incrementally or suddenly, shape, constitute and transform the political and economic environment around and beyond them* (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007, 15-16, emphasis in original).

In accordance with this definition, the contributions to the volume edited by Hobson and Seabrooke (2007) take everyday politics to refer to autonomous or innovative action by subordinate actors within regimes structured by formal rules and elite interests. Through such action, subordinate or peripheral actors are able to subvert the conventional distribution of decision-making power and achieve outcomes that are more favourable to their collective interest. For instance, economic decisions made by small savers and investors are considered in terms of their effects on the (de-)legitimation of financial orders (Seabrooke 2007) and shifts in investment patterns (Langley 2007). These contributions consider formal – rule-bound and institutionalised – actions such as saving and investing by non-elites in the context of broader informal shifts in financial norms. The connection between formal and informal political actions is made by reference to 'axiorational behaviour' (Seabrooke 2007, 84; Langley 2007, 104), meaning action that is both rational and value-driven.

The focus of the work collected by Hobson and Seabrooke is on non-elite agency, covering both formal and informal political action, and is therefore overlapping but not entirely congruent with the definition of everyday politics adopted here. The definition of subordinate actors is also broader in the Hobson and Seabrooke volume than the definition of non-elites adopted in this thesis. For instance, Sharman (2007, 45) considers small states targeted as tax havens by the OECD as 'small, peripheral actors which have traditionally been marginalised by the dominant regulatory framework'. While political actors representing tax havens are subordinate within an international regulatory order, they are simultaneously state elites within their local political environment and benefit from association with international financial elites.

Political status is clearly context-dependent, but state actors are excluded from the definition of everyday actors used here for two related reasons. First, because state representatives are not acting within a subordinated population, but rather operate as elites, even if some are more elite than others. Second, because statehood grants a formal status of sovereign independence which these actors are able to draw on to define and defend anomalous positions (in this case, capital mobility and low taxation). However, Sharman makes a compelling argument that the behaviour of those representing small states in

negotiating elite norms to suit their own ends shares important characteristics with the behaviour of subordinate groups in local and national politics. Points of definition aside, the approaches to everyday politics developed by the contributors to the collection edited by Seabrooke and Hobson are significant and valuable for the present study, as they highlight the role of subordinate actors in shaping the emergence of international norms.

Research ethics

Drawing attention to the power relations within which the CBOs in this study are constituted as subordinate also requires that attention be paid to the power relations involved in the research itself. Within my research project, the ethics and relations of power between myself and the participants in the research were enmeshed in the same networks of collective relationships that inform the results of the study. The relationships that I established as a researcher were primarily with organisations, through contact with members of the leadership or whoever was responsible for liaising with international visitors. In so doing, I was very often aware of participating in the very processes of international relationship-building that I was studying. I was also, of course, replicating many of the inequalities of power involved in international relationships. From my appearance as a (particularly tall) white male I was immediately recognisable as a privileged outsider, in the same category as the aid workers and NGO representatives whose relationships to the CBOs I was interested in studying. As a citizen of a Western country I enjoy many privileges not available to many of the participants in my research. For instance, I was able to travel freely on a passport issued by the government of my country of birth and to rely on some degree of assistance from the embassies of that country, neither of which was possible for any of the Burmese activists I met.

At the same time as my research process reflected the processes of non-state international relations, and the associated unequal power dynamics, my approach to research ethics emphasised my accountability as a researcher to the organisations and communities I was researching with. In the process of organising the research interviews, I was able to rely on the local expertise of CBOs to make arrangements for the security of myself and my research participants. This required me to place a great deal of trust in my contacts, for my personal safety and for the progress of my research, just as they were trusting me with access to the information provided by the participants from their organisations. The research I conducted would not have been possible without the agreement and support of the organisations I was studying, as well as the individual consent of the participants. I acknowledge a personal debt to those organisations and individuals which it may not be possible for me to fully repay. However, as I discuss in

Chapter Six of this thesis, one of the primary objectives of CBOs from both Burma and the Philippines in engaging with outsiders such as myself is to raise awareness of the political situations in their countries. Participants across the groups I spoke to emphasised their hope that people such as me who heard their stories would share the information with others and would find ways to support their organisations. I see the publication of my research in this thesis and in other forms as the first part of my obligation to repay the trust shown to me by the participants in this research who shared their stories.

Fieldwork and analysis

The field research was developed through a six-stage process. First, initial questions were drawn from an extensive secondary literature review. Second, participants for interviews from Burma were selected using a 'snowball' method of building a list of contacts. Interviews were sought with a range of high-profile CBOs with a presence on the Thai-Burma border, and others recommended by contacts and interviewees. Where possible, interviews in Burma were conducted with activists and grassroots members of the groups as well as with leaders and spokespeople, while interviews conducted in the Philippines – as a secondary case study – were restricted to key spokespeople of major organisations. In the third stage, a small number of interviews were conducted as a pilot study of the interview questions, which enabled the questions to be revised and expanded in scope based on initial responses from interviewees. One example from this stage of refining interview questions is the importance that emerged from early interviews on the use of violence (or non-violence) in the strategies of opposition organisations in Burma, which helped to reorient the direction of research in counterintuitive ways compared with the questions suggested by the existing literature. In the fourth stage of the field research process, these revised questions were used in a broad range of interviews with Burmese organisations (and subsequently in the Philippines). Interviews were conducted at various locations, including Bangkok and Chiang Mai in Thailand, Thai border towns such as Mae Sot, Mae Sariang and Sangkla Buri; Mae La Oo refugee camp; and one site on the border of Karen state controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU). The interviews were conducted in October and November 2006 during fieldwork on the Thai-Burma border, as well as interviews conducted in the Philippines in April 2008 in the City of Manila and in the Cordillera region. A total of forty-five participants from leaders and members of community-based organisations were interviewed in Burma, along with six interviews with key spokespeople of major community-based organisations in the Philippines. These included in both cases a range of women's, student/youth, ethnic, and trade union organisations.

Interviews were semi-structured and based on a set of questions covering: (1) the goals of the groups; (2) their political actions in pursuit of these goals; and (3) the effectiveness of these strategies (see list of interview questions in Appendix B). The questions were aimed in particular at investigating different groups' relations to their community, other organisations, and the state regime. Participants were asked to describe the most important goals of their organisation, their personal reasons for involvement and the issues for their community. They were also asked about the activities of the group, what support they had received and what further actions they thought were needed to achieve the change they wanted to see. In addition, participants were asked whether they felt their goals and activities were understood and supported by other groups including international NGOs. Where translation was used, this was usually done by peers from the groups concerned. This kind of amateur translation involved some loss of precision, but allowed participants to talk more freely than would have been the case if using local translators who were unknown to the participants. Issues of confidentiality, consent, and use of information were covered in a written and spoken briefing. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed after the field research was completed. The fifth and final stage of the field research process involved the coding of transcriptions (discussed further below), in order to identify key relevant points from the interviews, which were then categorised into themes, and subsequently re-grouped into meta-categories to identify patterns, similarities, and differences both between different types of community-based organisations in each case and similarities and differences between the two cases.

Coding followed the process of grounded theory as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998). In the initial phase of open coding, transcripts were coded at the level of meaning expressed by the participant. The ideas or points expressed in the interview were paraphrased as closely as possible into 'meaning units'. The second phase of open coding involved abstracting each statement and grouping together like statements into 'second-order categories'. As with the first phase of coding, an attempt was made to base the coding on the original meaning expressed, even as it was abstracted out of its original specific context and related to other statements. In this way, as concepts and categories emerged through the interpretation of the researcher they also remained grounded in the expressed experiences of the participants. Depending on length, an interview transcript typically generated around 60 coded statements at the initial phase of open coding. During the second phase these statements were grouped together and added to existing 'second-order categories,' or a new category was added. As each interview was analysed, fewer new categories were required, until a saturated coding model was developed, consisting of 95

distinct categories. The next phase of 'axial coding' involved sorting these second order categories into broad groups, based on patterns emerging from the categorisation and interpretation of statements. Once a grounded theory model has reached the saturation point of coding it presents a highly systematic and reliable means of organising the collected data. As a process of theory generation the final stage of axial coding allows the researcher's interpretation and analysis to be based solidly in themes emerging from the data. From the identification of important themes, to the selection of illustrative quotes, following a grounded theory approach ensures that the material presented is a valid and representative portrayal of the collected data.

Emergence of themes

In this section I highlight and contextualise three points in the research process where key themes emerged from the analysis. The first point to highlight is the most general of the three; the observation, rather late in the process of axial coding, that the key processes I was studying could all be classified in terms of their contributions to particular inter-group relationships. The second point is that of the importance of political legitimacy, an idea that was present in the original kernel of my research question in the form of a concern with state legitimacy, but which has expanded in significance and generality as a way of conceptualising the interaction of CBOs with grassroots communities and international organisations as much as with states. The third point is the centrality of learning processes within both case studies, an idea that started as a straightforward observation of the prevalence of activity and concern around education and then expanded in theoretical significance once I started to consider the role of education and training in the formation and diffusion of political norms.

Relationships

When I initially began sorting the coded statements, the categories I focussed on reflected my interest in collective agency and the factors motivating it. I sorted the codes into categories of 'actions', 'problems', 'needs', 'lacks' and 'motivations'. Later, as I came across several coded statements which explicitly dealt with the relationships between groups, I added 'relationships' as a separate category. As I continued sorting codes, and especially in the process of deciding what was the main idea being expressed in particular statements, I began to notice that the relationships between groups had a more pervasive relevance to the processes being described than I had first thought. I decided to try a reorganisation of the Axial coding pattern to incorporate a more relational focus. The model I arrived at retains the original five categories (actions, problems, needs, lacks and

motivations) as sub-categories of relationship-building, where the high-level categories become instances of inter-group relationships. The relationships that emerged from the (re-)coding process as the most significant for the participants were those within the CBO, between the CBO and the local community, with other CBOs, with the state regime, and with international groups. None of these categories implies homogeneity or a lack of differentiation within as well as across categories, however the combination into one category of relations with various kinds of international organisation is reflective of a pattern that emerged from the interviews. As is discussed further in Chapter 6, participants tended to differentiate between international actors in terms drawn from local priorities, according for instance to what a particular person or group could contribute to raising awareness or resources. This picture of locally-centred international relations is interesting in its own right for what it can contribute to the study of what Sylvester has termed 'relations international' – the conceptualisation of politics on a global scale without necessarily prioritising state actors or formal institutions as the focus of analysis.

It has become common in IR theory to advocate a greater focus on relational processes and a move away from the 'substantialism' that treats entities like states as having a stable objective character (Jackson and Nexon 1999; Albert, Jacobsen and Lapid 2001, 3-5). This move towards a more process-oriented IR theory has been a central concern of the constructivist turn in the discipline. The concern is by no means restricted to constructivism however. Critical theorists have contributed to a relational view of power and non-state agency by opening the state-centric mainstream of IR theory to critique from broader political theory (Walker 1993). One form that this critical approach has taken is the application of post-structuralist theory to the study of the role which both state and non-state actors play in shaping the discursive practices of international relations. While some have argued that critical theories of IR share a commitment to a post-positivist epistemology (Lapid 1989), others have pointed out that there is more that divides than unites the theorists grouped under this label (Biersteker 1989). Constructivist approaches to international relations have found common ground with critical theorists who emphasise the constitutive relations between knowledge and power in international relations (Price and Reus-Smit 1998). There has also been a greater focus on process across International Relations theory as challenges to the traditional substantialism of the discipline have been absorbed and accommodated. Mainstream theorists have begun to consider the social relations and processes by which agents and structures are formed and reproduced through

the practice of world politics.[7] Widening the scope of our analysis to include non-state actors as participants in the construction and contestation of international relations is necessary for a consistently relational approach to the subject.

Legitimacy

When I began the research I was operating with a concept of political legitimacy as a property of state-society relations. As the research process progressed I began to see that CBOs were not just engaged in the contestation and production of state legitimacy, but were actively building their own political legitimacy in ways that were directly comparable to those of state regimes.

The idea that non-state actors are important players in the construction and contestation of political legitimacy is gaining acceptance in mainstream International Relations theory. Recent work addresses the role of non-state political and civil society organisations in contesting and claiming international legitimacy and builds on earlier work in International Political Economy (see Cutler, Haufler, and Porter 1999). In a recent volume, Hall and Biersteker (2002, 4) argue that, for many aspects of global governance, non-state political actors are bearers of legitimate authority in their own right. The concept of legitimate authority employed by Hall and Biersteker (2002, 204) emphasises both that it is a form of power based on consent and recognition rather than coercion and that legitimate authority may be held by both state and non-state actors. Another recent collection (Grande and Pauly 2005) reaches similar conclusions about transformations in global governance from the perspective of states. Grande and Pauly argue that new and complex forms of state

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[7] One area of mainstream international relations theory that has done much to advance a relational approach to world politics is that of the English School. For English School theorists however, the most important relations are those between states. According to Bull (2002), a minimal core of international norms is necessary for any stable international system to be maintained, including mutual recognition of sovereign territory and jurisdiction. More substantive norms, such as standards of democracy or human rights, have also developed over time to the point where we can speak of an 'international society of states'. These more substantive norms operate in defining the proper relationship between states and also between states and populations (Bull 2002, 8-10). This definition of international society is expanded by Martin Wight, who distinguishes between pluralist and solidarist conceptions of international society. A pluralist international society is one based on a minimal set of norms designed to encourage cooperation between states even where they differ on fundamental values and political systems. In contrast, a solidarist international society is one where a broader set of norms defines expectations of state behaviour based on universal values such as human rights, procedural justice, or democracy (Butterfield and Wight 1966, 52). Bull's concept of an international society and order based on sovereign states is situated within a broader concept of world order, defined as 'those patterns or dispositions of human activity that sustain the elementary or primary goals of social life among mankind as a whole' (Bull 2002, 19). World order is seen as wider, more fundamental, and morally prior to international order. Bull's normative claim that the rules and institutions of international society should be promoted rests ultimately on the judgement that the goals of international society represent the best contemporary answer to the problem of world order (Bull 2002, 21). The concepts of world order and world politics as the context for international society in the English School approach can be used to introduce the possibility of non-state agency in contesting the

sovereignty are emerging through the interaction of state and non-state actors in world politics. States have responded to challenges to their legitimacy by forging new relationships with non-state political actors, including public-private partnerships with commercial firms and consultation with civil society groups (Grande and Pauly 2005, 15). The contributors to the Grande and Pauly volume show that studying the relationship between states and non-state actors, including global civil society groups, is now of crucial importance for understanding political legitimacy.

An analysis of consent is of central importance to understanding the political character of power and legitimacy in international relations and in political theory more generally (Hindess 1996). As Hindess argues, concepts of political consent are at the core of Western political philosophy, but are rarely acknowledged as such. Thinkers like Hannah Arendt, who made consent an explicit foundation of her theory of power, are commonly seen as idiosyncratic exceptions to the tradition of treating power as a functional capacity. However, as Hindess (1996, 10-18) argues, this functionalist tradition is largely based on a selective reading of key theorists in which arguments about consent are treated as unimportant. Analysis of popular consent is central, for instance, to Weber's theory of political legitimacy[8], even though the neo-Weberian call to 'bring the state back in' to

norms of the international system (Buzan 2004).

[8] Legitimacy for Weber (1978) is a property of a social order, as judged by the actors within that order. Weber's definition of social action, as that behaviour which in its subjective meaning is oriented to take account of the behaviour of others, leads him to define a social order as one in which conduct is oriented toward more or less binding 'maxims' governing interaction. A social order is based on the orientation of actors toward maxims, (what we would now call norms), which may be accepted as expedient, customary, or legitimate, in order of relative stability. An *expedient* norm is one accepted on the basis of self interest; the instrumentally rational orientation of social action towards an actor's own perceived interests. A *customary* norm is accepted out of habit and usage, based on long standing. In contrast, a norm is *legitimate* if it is considered by an actor to be both valid and binding (Weber 1978, 31). Weber's definition of political legitimacy is therefore based on two fundamental elements necessary to avoid the reification and naturalisation of power: it is relational, and it is based on consent in the sense of an actor's conscious agreement with a norm[8].

Weber's theory of social maxims can be easily adapted to a typology of norms and corresponding explanations for behaviour in terms of social relations. Expedient norms are primarily enforced by social relations of consequences (Horne 2009a, 4-6; March and Olsen 1998, 949-51). Customary norms are associated with social relations of typicality and conformity (Horne 2009a, 9-11). Legitimate norms are distinguished by their reliance on social relations of appropriateness and validity (Horne 2009a, 6-9; March and Olsen 1998, 951-2). As March and Olsen (1998, 952) suggest, the logics of appropriateness and consequences are not mutually exclusive explanations for human behaviour and may overlap within the same social process. Similarly, the typology of social norms identified here should be understood – following Weber – as a series of ideal types, representing points on a continuum of social relations ranging from instrumental action to meaningful, value-based consent. Horne (2009a, 11-15) argues that the main theoretical explanations for the social enforcement of norms (consequentialism, meaning, and typicality) can each be understood as motivating factors within social relations of norm enforcement. When considering political legitimacy, it is important to pay attention to the everyday social interactions within which acts of loyalty and resistance are given meaning, and rewarded or sanctioned (Horne 2009b). The effective legitimacy of a political actor, Horne suggests, is affected by both the motivating factors and the density of social relations through which everyday norms of support for, or opposition to, the authority of the actor are demonstrated (Horne 2009b, 407-410).

International Relations theory (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985) is notably lacking a theory of either popular consent or political legitimacy more generally (Seabrooke 2002, 5).

Although Weber's theory of legitimacy has been influential in sociology, contemporary theorists differ on how state legitimacy is to be measured. Beetham (1991) disagrees with Weber's suggestion that state legitimacy is a simple empirical question of popular belief, arguing that legitimacy is a judgement that requires normative analysis. Therefore, for Beetham (1991, 11) 'a given power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy, but because it can be justified in terms of their beliefs'. Beetham argues that the primary criterion of political legitimacy is conformity to established rules for the acquisition, transfer, and use of power. The justification of the established rules in terms of shared beliefs is a secondary condition, followed by actual evidence of consent by the governed (1991, 15-6). While this establishes a hierarchy of criteria, the three aspects of legitimacy are expected to be taken together, and each may emerge as most important at different times. Regimes based on coercion rather than consent may be justified quite elaborately in the legal and moral terms of the powerful, but not translated successfully into the terms of the governed. What is important for Beetham's (1991, 31 emphasis in original) definition is that there is a 'legitimate *relationship*, justified in terms of shared beliefs, regulated according to understood conventions and confirmed through the expression of consent'. Therefore, although Beetham emphasises normative analysis over studies of popular opinion in the measurement of legitimacy, he maintains Weber's emphasis on the relational and consensual qualities of state legitimacy.

The primary point of difference between Beetham's framework and my usage of the concept of legitimacy is one of emphasis. Where Beetham gives central importance to the role of a distanced observer in judging legitimacy, the focus in this thesis is on the agency of everyday actors. Effectively, the emphasis in this thesis on what Beetham calls 'actual evidence of consent' inverts his hierarchy of criteria for establishing legitimacy. This does not mean that there is no role for judgement in establishing legitimacy, but rather that the assumed locus of judgement is shifted from the academic researcher to the participants in the research. The approach to consensual legitimacy in this research is concerned with both the facts of practice and the interpretation and meaning of practice according to the participants. Motivations and self-understandings are considered just as important as externally observed acts of compliance or resistance in judging the presence or lack of

political legitimacy.

Learning

Early in the research process I noticed the extent to which participants emphasised the importance of education and training. Education was treated as a priority for national and community development by organisations from both Burma and the Philippines. The majority of organisations included various forms of education and training as core elements of their political organising and community service programmes. This emphasis on education in itself seemed to be an interesting finding worthy of further investigation. As I progressed with the coding process, and especially once I began to code for relationships between organisations, I noticed the central importance of learning processes in the relationships between CBOs and communities, and between CBOs and international groups. As is discussed further in chapters five and six, the education and training programmes being run by CBOs were key to relationship-building between the organisations and their base communities, and between CBOs and international groups.

Much of the published work on learning in social movements tends to assume the emancipatory potential of individual agency based on universal democratic values (see for instance Welton 1993b; Walter 2007). Kilgore (1999) challenges the individualist assumptions of research on learning in social movements and develops a model of collective learning based on an innovative reading of educational psychology in which both individuals and collectives are treated as examples of 'learning systems'. Kilgore argues convincingly that learning systems operating at the group level are of central importance for the study of social movements (Kilgore 1999, 197).

Based on a study of transnational cooperation and the growth in the numbers and networks of GCSOs, Smith (1997) argues that political learning processes among transnational social movements merit further attention. Smith suggests a working hypothesis that 'political learning on the global stage should produce new conceptualisations of politics and appropriate strategies of influence, just as national activism has transformed movement strategies and tactics historically' (Smith 1997, 57).

Writing in a western context, Holford (1995) argues that adult educators can play important roles as 'movement intellectuals', but that the historical link between adult education and progressive social movements has largely been broken (Holford 1995, 109). The empirical research presented in this chapter provides evidence that, in the context of non-western developing countries, adult education and social movements are very much connected. Holford's broader argument about the potential links between the practices of adult education and social movements is therefore particularly relevant.

Postcolonial theorists have also interrogated the power relationships involved in education and learning processes more generally. In particular, postcolonial theorists have drawn links between education and colonisation and have located their critique of educational practice within the power relationships of colonial and postcolonial societies. For Chatterjee (2001), civil society in colonial and postcolonial societies can itself be seen as a pedagogical project. Through an analysis of political practice during India's struggle for independence, Chatterjee shows how practices of civil society, such as public meetings, literary societies and their publications, and even funerals, were deliberately encouraged by the nationalist elite to give credibility to their campaign for independence. In doing so, civil society was constructed as an elite practice of public education which overlaid and represented already existing forms of political society in India. When the Bengali poet and independence leader Rabindranath Tagore wrote: 'Our public is still young; its behaviour bears the mark of adolescence … such a public needs to be educated, and discussions in public meetings are a principal means of education', Chatterjee argues that he was stating 'the fundamental problematic of nationalist modernity under colonial conditions. The driving force of colonial modernity is a pedagogical mission' (Chatterjee 2001, 168).

Critical theories of education have also encouraged reflection on the relationship between theories and practices of education, with broad implications for understanding the connections between ideas and learning processes in political change. The process of developing mutual connections between theory and practice is what Freire called 'praxis', following the usage of the term by earlier Marxist thinkers such as Labriola and Gramsci (Adamson 1983, 114; Gramsci 1971, 369). Freire defined praxis as 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire 2000, 51), and he saw this as the central purpose of education and political learning processes. For Freire, the ideal form of education for the purposes of both revolutionary praxis and egalitarian learning is described as a dialogical process. A dialogical learning process is one in which a dialogue between teacher and student is used to explicitly draw attention to power relations in the learning environment and in the wider social context, and to work against inequalities of power and privilege (Freire and Shor 1987). The concept of dialogical learning has been widely adopted as a guide for creating transformative and emancipatory learning relationships (Borda 2001). Bearing in mind the dialogical model when analysing learning processes also encourages a focus on the dynamic interactions of social power and inequalities in the processes being studied.

Conclusion

In the chapters which follow, the results of the empirical research process outlined in this

chapter are presented. The research process, including the adaptation of Grounded Theory techniques of research design and analysis, allows both a close engagement with the data and a rigorous development of emergent themes. Following the relational model that emerged in the process of analysis, the presentation of results emphasises the political relationships formed by CBOs in local and international contexts. In each of the following chapters, the numerous examples and references to the interviews conducted with participants follow a thematic structure that emerged from the analysis of the research data as a whole. In particular, the concepts of political legitimacy and of learning processes are presented in this thesis in accordance with the way they emerged through the research process, through a constant conversation with the data provided by the research participants.

2

Consensual Power: The Everyday Politics of Non-State Legitimacy

The focus in the following empirical sections is on community-based organisations (CBOs) as a particular category of non-state political actors, and specifically four categories of non-state actors: ethnic groups; women's groups; student groups; and trade union organisations. CBOs may mediate between states and people in the construction and contestation of state legitimacy, but they are not necessarily confined to this intermediate role. Rather, CBOs are shown to be actively building their own political legitimacy through reciprocal relationships with communities. Because consensual legitimacy involves belief as well as action, the analysis of the cases engages with both the political actions engaged in by participants and their self-identified motivations for these actions. Consensual legitimacy is a quality of relationships which are built over time between a political organisation and base communities. Consideration of the case studies therefore begins with a brief overview of the historical development of opposition movements in Burma and the Philippines, with political relationships placed in their historical context in order to understand the emergence of consent and dissent. It is argued that non-state opposition groups in both countries are engaged in building consensual power through the development of reciprocal relationships between the organisations and their base communities. The key aspects of this consensual legitimacy are identified as resistance, assistance, and communication. Opposition organisations gain popular legitimacy by mobilising resistance to unpopular governments and government policies. They build their legitimacy by providing direct assistance that meets the immediate needs of their communities. And they sustain relationships of consensual legitimacy through practices of reciprocal communication with the community.

Historical Development of Opposition in Burma

The role of minority ethnic groups as opposition forces in Burma is as old as the centralised states of the pre-colonial period. The pre-colonial states system in the region can be broadly characterised by the overlapping and competing influence of the Burman,

Arakan, Mon, and Shan kingdoms. It was only in the period immediately prior to the nineteenth-century British invasions that the Burmese court at Ava attained hegemony in the region (Smith 2002, 6-7). However, as Scott (2009) emphasises, the power of the lowland kingdoms in the region was in constant tension with the ability of self-governing highland peoples to evade and resist the imposition of state rule. Thus, the power of groups such as the Kachin, Karen, Palaung, Lahu, Akha, and Chin/Zomi peoples was historically based not on state-formation but on state-evasion (Scott 2009, 178-219). As well as being the frequent progenitors of anti-state rebellions, the self-governing peoples of the hill regions provided zones of refuge for subjects of the lowland states fleeing from taxation, conscription, and forced labour (Scott 2009, 142-150).

This pattern of highland challenges to lowland state authority has continued through the colonial period to the present day. In the immediate post-independence period, the attempts of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) government to establish effective sovereignty over the entire territory of Burma as well as a centralised military structure were fiercely resisted by the non-Burman ethnic groups. The origins of Burma's contemporary ethnic insurgencies lie in the post-independence imposition of a unitary and centralised state structure, exacerbated by subsequent attempts by the central state to seek a military solution to the problem of national unity. The ceasefire agreements that many ethnic armies signed with the military regime in the 1990s have not addressed the underlying political tension between the claims to unitary sovereignty of the central state and the demands for autonomy by the non-Burman ethnic organisations. Ethnic organisations belonging to the National Democratic Front (NDF) continue to push for a political settlement, including constitutional change to a federal structure recognising autonomy for ethnic states on Burma's borders. This position is also supported by some ceasefire groups such as the New Mon State Party (NMSP), which despite the ceasefire has maintained a degree of political and military independence from the regime (interview 33, 2006).

The contemporary women's movements from Burma have their origins in the struggle for full participation and equality for women within the ethnic and student resistance organisations. The Burmese Women's Union was formed in 1995 by women members of the ABSDF who were frustrated by the expectations of male leaders that women would play an auxiliary role in the struggle, supporting the male leadership (interview 13, 2006). For example, women activists in the ABSDF found that the needs of women in the organisation and in their base communities were not being adequately represented or addressed (interview 12, 2006). While some women activists devoted themselves full-time

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to the new organisation, many members of the BWU adopted a dual membership and retained their roles as activists and soldiers in the ABSDF (interview 13, 2006). In the same period during the mid 1990s, women members of the ethnic opposition groups were also forming independent women's organisations. As with the student resistance movement, women in the insurgent ethnic groups had long been expected to play a supporting role, performing duties such as cooking and preparing food for male fighters (interview 22, 2006).

By forming independent organisations such as the Karen Women's Organisation (KWO), Mon Women's Organisation (MWO), Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT), and others, women activists have been able to focus on issues of importance to women within their communities while also promoting the role of women within the political struggle. The women's movements from Burma have therefore been described as a 'struggle within a struggle' (Irrawaddy 2010). Since establishing independent organisations and the umbrella Women's League of Burma, the women's movement has taken a leading role in international lobbying to challenge the legitimacy of the military regime in Burma (interview 12, 14, 25, 2006).

The opposition activism of students in Burma has its origins in the independence movement and early opposition to the establishment of military rule. Following independence, the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) was formed under the AFPFL government of the 1950s and in its early years led student strikes and protests against government imposition of regulations on student hostels and threats against the legal status of the student union (Mannello 1957; Aung Saw Oo 1993). Similar protests continued during the military government period from 1958 to 1962. But after General Ne Win's coup d'état in 1962, the military regime no longer tolerated student protest. When students at Rangoon University demonstrated against education reforms in 1962, government troops fired on the students and dynamited the student union building. After political organisations were declared illegal in 1964, underground student organising and occasional protest activity continued without a centralised organisation (Aung Saw Oo 1993). While the mass protests of 1988 marked a resurgence in student participation in the opposition movement, the reformulation of student organisations had begun some time before. One member of the BWU who had been a student in Kachin state in 1988 described joining an organisation known as the National Young Student Union, which began holding meetings in the area. She became an organiser with the union and took part in organising anti-government protests in 1988 (interview 13, 2006). Similar processes of secretly reorganising the student movement and mobilising support for anti-government

protests were going on in all parts of the country (interview 2, 3, 8, 2006). Student activists, organisers and leaders emerged from the process of organising the underground student movement and went on to play leading roles in challenging the legitimacy of the military regime. In 1988, for example, students were at the forefront of organising and leading protests in urban areas, as well as spreading word of the uprising to rural areas (Aung Saw Oo 1993; interviews, 2006).

The role of the trade unions and the workers' movement in Burmese politics followed a similar trajectory to that of the student movement, emerging as a political force in the struggle for independence. The British colonial government's repression of the nationalist Thakin movement led to a series of protest strikes, out of which the first trade union federation, the All Burma Trade Union Congress (ABTUC), was formed in 1939. The involvement of the ABTUC in opposition activity continued after independence, with the organisation of a successful general strike in 1949 to oppose state servant layoffs and pay cuts (NLD 1997). Although the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) played a significant role in the initial formation of the ABTUC, this role decreased after independence as the CPB focused on rural armed struggle. By the time of its collapse in 1989, the CPB's influence was confined to areas on the borders with Thailand and China, and the organisation had little contact with workers' organisations (Lintner 1990). Overt trade union activity went into abeyance during the 1962-1988 period of military rule. The underground workers movement continued to organise itself as an opposition force, however, with widespread anti-government strikes occurring in 1974 without centralised leadership (Lintner 1990, 28). This pattern continued during the wave of anti-government protests in 1988, with workplace and township strike committees formed to coordinate general strikes and to take part in protests (interview 15, 5, 2006). Activists from the workers' movement then met to re-form the national trade union movement, first in Rangoon in September 1988 and later on the Thai-Burma border in 1991. At this stage, the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma was formed to bring together affiliated unions, organise an underground labour movement, and oppose the military regime in Burma (interview 14, 2006; FTUB 2010).

Historical Development of Opposition in the Philippines

In the Philippines, the contemporary organisations of the extra-parliamentary legal opposition have their immediate origins in the struggle against the Marcos regime. During the period of martial law, a significant role in maintaining opposition to the regime was played by the underground organisation of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which attracted many activists from previously legal organisations, such as student and trade unions, which had been suppressed by the regime (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, 219).

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Opposition to the government under martial law was also maintained by armed groups. In addition to the communist guerrilla forces under the New People's Army, ethnic- and religious-based movements maintained anti-government insurgencies in the Mindanao and Cordillera regions. Anti-government mobilisations among the Cordillera peoples centred on opposition to large-scale development projects such as the Chico dam promoted by the Marcos regime (interview 3, 2008). Anti-government organising gathered pace after the government backed the assassination of popular opposition leader Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino in August 1983 and the manipulation of elections in 1984. A broad, urban-based opposition movement formed, largely independent of the CPP, but with widespread support among left-wing students and workers and from sections of the church and military (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, 221-3).

In this period of organising against the Marcos regime, the women's movements emerged as an important mobilisation structure. In October 1983, a rally of 10,000 women, the first mass mobilisation under martial law, challenged the legitimacy of the Marcos regime. The following March, GABRIELA was formed as a national network of women's organisations to fight for democracy (interview 4, 2008). In 1985, BAYAN was formed as an umbrella organisation to lead anti-government protesters, bringing together more than a thousand people's organisations, including established alliances such as GABRIELA, militant unions under the KMU, and student and peasant organisations (interview 2, 2008; BAYAN, 2010a). This democratic movement provided the organisational base for the 'people power' revolution in 1986 (Abinales and Amoroso 2005, 224-5). The mass community-based organisations affiliated to BAYAN subsequently played a leading role in the ousting of President Estrada in 2001 (interview 1,2, 2008).

Constructing Consensual Power: Legitimate Non-State Actors

For the community-based organisations in this study, an important aspect of legitimacy is the reciprocity of the relationships with their base communities. Reciprocity means that the people and the organisation need each other and, in the extreme case, depend on each other for their continued existence. Reciprocity is distinct from, though compatible with, representation as a basis for consensual legitimacy. While representational forms of legitimacy require that people consent to an organisation representing their interests, reciprocal legitimacy requires a consensual relationship of mutual need. This point was made explicitly by the spokesperson of one of the smaller organisations in the study, the Palaung State Liberation Front, who emphasised the importance of reciprocity in the original founding of the Palaung movements. On the one hand, the Palaung community came to see the organisation as protecting them and acting in their interests. On the other

hand, the organisation recognised that their purpose for existing depended on the community and their support for the organisation (interview 34, 2006).

The extent to which organisations in the study have cultivated reciprocal relationships of consensual legitimacy can be seen by how effectively the organisation meets the needs of the community in ways which make the involvement of the community indispensable for the organisation. The focus in the remainder of this chapter is on three dimensions of the construction of consensual power, including strategies of *resistance*, *assistance*, and *communication*. While common terms such as these have broader meanings, both in academic discourse and across different societies and cultures, this chapter illustrates that an important component of the everyday politics of democratic opposition is how the meaning of particular strategies is a product of concrete political *practices* – whereby the substance of social norms and forms of political contestation is enacted via 'meaning-in-use' (Wiener 2009).

Resistance

For people suffering under military and political repression, mobilising resistance is an important need. The consensual legitimacy of opposition groups in terms of resistance depends on the extent to which they successfully mobilise popular support against a regime. During the Burmese democracy protests of 1988, the common experience of oppression by the government created a wide base of support for the protests. Many of the members of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) who were interviewed for this study had been active in organising the 1988 protests in different geographic areas, before they came together in the border region to form the student army. Burma's border zones have been highly significant as a refuge for opposition groups, both inside the country in the 'liberated areas' controlled by armed resistance groups like the Karen National Union (KNU) / Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and in the border regions of Thailand, Bangladesh, and India (see Callahan 2005, Smith 1999)[9].

The 1988 democracy movement in Burma was not limited to actors involved in community-based organisations, opposition political parties, or full-time social activists, but drew political backing and assistance from a broad cross-section of the population. As one member of the ABSDF described it: 'the majority of people supported the protests, not

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[9] In the time since the fall of the KNU headquarters at Manerplaw in 1995 (see Fong 2008, 168-70) the geographical space controlled by opposition groups on the Thai-Burma border has steadily diminished, with armed resistance groups either resorting to guerrilla tactics or signing ceasefire agreements with the regime. In 2009, some of the last remaining fixed territory positions held by the KNU/KNLA, including one of the areas visited in the course of this research, were overrun in a joint operation by SPDC and

just students but also workers, servants, housewives' (interview 3, 2006). Another ABSDF member described widespread support for the democracy movement in Karen state: 'A lot of officials resigned from their positions. They joined demonstrations. Doctors, engineers, ruling class, even police officers, customs officers, from different sectors supported peaceful demonstrations' (interview 8, 2006). Others described the process of mobilising people from their home communities to join the protests. One ABSDF member had been a student at the time of the uprising. When the universities were closed by the regime, he was sent home to his village where, like many other student radicals, he continued organising: 'In the 1988 uprising I was in our village. We set a demonstration camp in our village. We tried to organise the villagers who lived in our village. We tried to explain to them about the government'. Another activist who later joined the ABSDF was a peasant living in a rural village at the time. He described hearing about the protests by word of mouth and then taking part in meetings of the village social committees (*Khalada Puy)* to discuss the news and a collective response: 'During the uprising in 1988 there are a lot of people who suffer lack of food. The price of the food is very high. Most of the people have not enough food to eat for their survival. In their section they try to meet as *Khalada Puy*, women's and men's organisation to discuss about the situation, how to have the protest uprising' (interview 5, 2006). When the ABSDF was formed as a resistance organisation on the border, its legitimacy with the border communities was initially based on the reputation that the students had gained as leaders of the 1988 resistance movement. As one ABSDF member, who had been a student himself, put it: 'students had a good reputation: selfless, committed, to fight for the people of Burma, not for themselves' (interview 8, 2006).

Once a CBO has become established in the leadership of popular resistance in Burma, the legitimacy of that organisation can be assessed via the level of popular support for resistance, in terms of both cooperation and material support (interview 22 and 34, 2006). With respect to forms of cooperation, the legitimacy and popular support of resistance organisations enables their ability to move freely through contested areas by relying on information from villagers. Resistance groups in the border areas, such as the KNLA, are then able to offer safe passage to other groups such as trade unions to enable them to organise in their area (interviews 15, 16, 2006). This cooperation is reciprocal in that members of organisations such as the KNLA who are moving through the border areas exchange information with villagers and internally displaced people about movements of government troops (interview 19, 2006). This ability of opposition organisations to warn people in border communities of approaching government troops constitutes an important

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DKBA troops (Saw Yan Naing 2009).

factor in the popular legitimacy of groups such as the ABSDF and KNLA. With such warnings, relayed in person or by radio, communities are able to keep one step ahead of the soldiers and move to protect their lives, food stocks, and animals (interviews 5 and 16, 2006). This mode of reciprocal relationship based on information and safe movement between communities and armed resistance organisations is most pronounced in the free-fire zones of active conflict in Karen state. But a similar relationship exists between resistance groups and local communities in areas of armed tension such as Arakan state and Shan state. In these areas, resistance groups with small armed forces such as the Arakan Liberation Party or the Palaung State Liberation Front also rely on the support of the community in order to be able to move through the area (interviews 10, 34).

For the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) in the Philippines, the legitimacy of the organisation is seen primarily in terms of a reputation for struggling alongside the people. In a practical sense, this reputation is constructed and mobilised within the practices of organising and educating at the community level, as well as networking in local and international contexts. In describing the international recognition of the organisation by other grassroots organisations, the CPA's general secretary emphasised the importance of the organisation's commitment to local struggles in building its reputation and legitimacy:

> ...they know that our cause is just and legitimate and even to the last drop of our blood, we are committed to such cause, even if it means death, we do not surrender, so we speak on high moral ground. It is not for our self-interest or opportunism, but it's really for the people's cause (interview 3, 2008).

With regard to the CPA's base communities, the legitimacy of the organisation, including its reputation of leadership in social struggles, is based on ongoing practices of community organising and education. The CPA has organised programs of political education designed to provide the 'necessary analytical tools' to the 'root causes of the issues and basic problems of the people, as a distinct people'. The idea of the Cordillera peoples as a distinct group within the Filipino nation is a prominent part of the way that the CPA frames its involvement in broader popular movements in the Philippines, for instance, in connecting the demand for self-determination in the form of autonomy for the Cordillera region with the broader struggles of national liberation. This analysis guides the organisation's practice of building a regional alliance of Cordillera peoples, including a diverse range of indigenous groups in the area. It also legitimates the integration of the CPA into national networks of Philippine nationalist organisations and its affiliation to BAYAN. The nationalist orientation of the CPA, together with its guiding principles of self-determination and defence of ancestral lands, are conceived of in practical terms. The

organisation is understood by its leadership not as guided by abstract political principles but rather as 'the concrete expression of the people's movement' (interview 3, 2008). The materialism of this statement implies more than a certain influence of Marxist rhetoric which is common in the Philippines. It reveals an understanding of the organisation as based on its concrete relations with people and the land. The political goal of defending ancestral land is based on an analysis of these concrete relations more than any abstract principle: '[we] cannot exist any more as distinct indigenous peoples without a material base for our existence, and that is precisely our ancestral land' (interview 3, 2008). From its inception, the CPA has been involved in coordinating local campaigns in defence of ancestral lands, from the campaigns against the Chico dam and Cellophil projects of the Marcos era, to the contemporary threats posed by multi-national logging companies. The repertoire of contention in these campaigns has ranged from information sharing and local organising, to coordinated direct action and protest, to political and legal challenges through national institutions. The dynamics of both armed and non-armed resistance are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Assistance

Providing direct assistance to communities in their areas is a priority for most of the groups in this study. In this respect, the network of social relationships that activist organisations establish with their base communities forms an essential component of their legitimation strategies (as well as representing an important terrain in which state legitimacy is contested, such as when community-based organisations substitute for – or compete with – inadequate state provision of public goods and community needs). For example, numerous participants in the study expressed the view that communities who had received support from an organisation for their basic needs would be more likely to regard that organisation as legitimate. This is not simply an instrumental process of buying support, but is more a case of a community judging an organisation on its actions. An organisation which looks after the needs of the community is more likely to be seen as genuine in their desire to work with the people, and consequently is more likely to gain the support of the community. One ABSDF member described this effect in relation to the families of children who attended the school that the organisation had founded in its border camp:

> ABSDF provides some of the education assistance to the people who live in the frontline area. For example they bring some of the children from the frontline area. They provide shelter to them and teach them at the ABSDF school. So the children's parents know what is the ABSDF, how they have helped them, so they support them. This is one kind of support from the community. (interview 3, 2006)

Activists' responses indicate a strongly principled belief that their organisations have a responsibility to meet the needs of their base communities. As a spokesperson described the activities of the New Mon State Party, 'it is acting as a political party in Mon state. But while they are doing that, they also have a responsibility for the people in Mon state, for their education, for their health, for their development' (interview 33, 2006). The legitimacy of community-based organisations is therefore contingent upon a sense of responsibility to the community, expressed in this case through various forms of direct assistance to meet the needs of the community.

In the process of organising women in grassroots communities in the Philippines, the GABRIELA women's network follows a process of identifying community needs and finding collective solutions. An organiser will visit a community, often by request, and discuss the needs of the women as part of a social investigation of the situation of the women in the community. On the basis of this investigation, organisers recommend programs to organise in the area and request support from the regional chapter of GABRIELA. The support available to local member groups depends in part on the priorities identified in GABRIELA's national action plan, which in turn is decided at an annual conference with participation of delegates from local groups and regional chapters. The national secretary of GABRIELA stressed that this general program of action 'is very wide, so when you go down to the community they define it based on their own needs and based on their own issues' (interview 4, 2008). As programs are implemented, organisers train local organisers from the community to take over the tasks of running the programs and organising their community as part of the GABRIELA network. If the projects are successful, the organisation develops a reputation for effectiveness. On hearing about the results, neighbouring communities contact the organisation to request that they too be organised, a process which the chairperson of GABRIELA referred to as the 'multiplier effect' of community organising (interview 4, 2008).

Communication

Communication is an essential ingredient in the reciprocal relationships that constitute the popular legitimacy of opposition groups. In the process of communication, popular legitimacy rests on understandings and experiences of oppression, combined with a political framework for translating this experience into action. This mutual understanding is formed in the process of community organising and propagandising, while also drawing heavily on narratives of national identity. Identity-construction processes represent a powerful source of legitimation (both among elite and non-elite actors) at the same time as offering a potent resource for the contestation of state legitimacy. Indeed, as Cummings

(Cummings 2006, 180) suggests, 'The way in which identification is developed and transforms... matters for various groups' economic, political, and social resources'. This is relevant whether the group in question is comprised of elite actors or community-based organisations operating at the local everyday level.

An important source of legitimacy for each of the organisations in the study is therefore their role in promoting and enabling the self-definition of a community. Such identity-building practices can of course operate in more than one dimension of group affiliation. For example, for the majority of organisations in Burma this means being based – first and foremost – on an ethnic definition of community. For long-standing ethnic organisations such as the Karen National Union (KNU), New Mon State Party (NMSP), and Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), the history of the organisation has been closely tied to the recent history of their ethnic community. Through a long-term process of building support in the community, these organisations have become closely associated with the survival and political destiny of the people. Within the ethnic community, organisations also create particular constituencies for themselves, representing women, youth, or workers. These organisations are then able to derive legitimacy both from their contribution to the development of their ethnic community, and from their cross-ethnic links to other groups of women, youth, or workers. Some organisations have attempted to cultivate these cross-ethnic constituencies as their primary community – women in the case of the BWU, students for the ABSDF, and workers for the FTUB – with varying degrees of success. In these examples, actors have engaged in at least three forms of constructing group affiliation and common identity, based on *ethnicity*, *intra-ethnic sectoral identities*, and *inter-ethnic sectoral identities*.

One important historical example of the role of community-based organisations in the construction of group identity in Burma is the emergence of the dominant Palaung faction that formed the PSLO in 1976. The emergence of the PSLO amid shifting ethnic alliances was attributed to the successful community organising of activists loyal to Mai Kwan Tong (interview 34, 2006 and Mai Aik Phone 2006, 52-3). The present-day PSLF makes claims to legitimacy in part by its claim to be the true inheritor of the political line of Mai Kwan Tong. For the purpose of this claim to legitimacy, it suits the PSLF to present the legacy of Mai Kwan Tong in terms of timeless aims and objectives and a heroic narrative of Palaung nationalism, and the claim that this legacy is embodied by the new organisation.

> During the PNF, Palaung National Front is still combined with the Shan organisation, so they don't have clear aim and objective. After that Mai Kwan Tong set up the Palaung political wing and armed wing for Palaung political movement.

> So now most people will accept that he is our hero, our Palaung hero. (interview 34, 2006)

This quote, from the contemporary leader of the PSLF, makes reference to the heroic narrative of Palaung independence from the Shan organisations, a discursive link which is continued in publications of the PSLF (Palaung State Liberation Front 2010; Mai Aik Phone 2006). However, when discussing the historical context for the formation of the Palaung organisations, the PSLF spokesperson emphasised the lessons to be drawn from the strategic community organising carried out by Mai Kwan Tong's dominant Palaung faction. At the same time as negotiating military alliances, this faction which formed the PSLO was sending community organisers to all the Palaung communities, crossing previous boundaries of kinship and loyalty and spreading a message of Palaung nationalism.

This narrative emphasises the constructed nature of Palaung nationalism. It also defines the legacy of the 1970s leaders as much in terms of community organising as of national heroism. Both narratives, of national heroism and of community organising, are relevant to the legitimacy claims of the contemporary PSLF. On the one hand, the narrative of national heroism provides ideational resources which help the leadership to appeal to the loyalty of Palaung communities. Identifying as a nation is also an advantage for seeking recognition from outsiders, as it fits easily with existing understandings of the rights of self-determination accruing to nations. On the other hand, the narrative of community organising provides the leadership and activists of the contemporary organisation with a model of a successful strategy for mobilising popular support. In practice, the two narratives are compatible, suggesting a strategy for mobilising popular support through both community organising and appeals to national loyalty, even though this involves combining two narratives which rest on quite different conceptions of the sources of national identity.

This integration of claims to legitimacy based on community organising and national identity was common to most of the groups in the study. The majority of active CBOs were connected to an ethno-nationalist organisation recognised by their base community. Women's and youth organisations were often formed in association with ethnic organisations, both to further the goals of the ethnic organisations and to promote reform within them. Although in formal terms the women's and youth organisations were often either loosely connected or entirely autonomous from the ethnic organisations, there was a clear sense that they were connected by relations of recognition and legitimacy. For instance, the Kachin Women's Association in Thailand (KWAT) had had no formal

relationship or contact with the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) since the latter had signed a ceasefire agreement with the SPDC regime, yet a spokesperson for KWAT described the KIO as follows:

> KIO is the heart of our Kachin people. That's why it is very important, they should understand for Kachin people, what Kachin local people facing problems and they should consult them and listen to the Kachin people's voice and they should involve to protect and to get democracy for Burma (interview 23, 2006).

This was a particularly clear statement of a common theme in which the legitimacy of a CBO was based both on an emotional identification of the organisation with national loyalty and on an expectation of reciprocal communication and advocacy. CBOs organised around groups within the community, such as women and youth, would associate themselves with the ethno-nationalist organisation for their community to the extent that the latter had established authority based on identification with ethno-nationalist values and on procedures of reciprocal communication.

Communication also has a more generalised relevance to the legitimacy of CBOs in the region, as they function as conduits to access international flows of information. Numerous activists describe their involvement with a community-based organisation as their first opportunity for contact with the world outside Burma, with consequent opportunities for education and personal development. Organisations are aware of the importance of these experiences, and often run dedicated internship programmes for the purpose of bringing emerging activists across the border for exposure and training programmes. These opportunities entail a responsibility to use the awareness and education gained to serve the community. Interns from KWAT also expressed a sense of responsibility to use their relatively greater access to the international community to communicate the suffering and experience of their communities inside Burma (interview 23).

CBOs in the study were able to establish channels of reciprocal communication with relative ease in their base communities due to the shared linguistic and cultural background of activists and community members. When asked about differences between local and international forms of communication, a spokesperson for the Karen Women's Organisation emphasised a combination of cultural factors and shared experience:

> If you talk to the people in our grassroots communities it's like they're your communities and feel more close to them … I think for the community inside Karen state there is not much you have to talk about Burma and the brutality of the SPDC, because they experience it, they know already (interview 25, 2006).

Another participant, a medic with the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), described

participating in processes of consultation between Karen National Union (KNU) representatives and villagers from her area. The KNU representative would visit the area and meet with the village headman, who would then call a meeting of the whole village. When asked about the differences between talking to villagers and talking to the author in the interview process, the KNLA medic responded: 'We are very similar to the villagers, so you can speak freely, not be afraid it's the right answer or wrong answer, or have no idea' (interview 19, 2006). This response illustrates the importance of social and cultural affinity as a precondition for reciprocal communication and thus legitimacy.

Among the Philippines opposition movements, community organising is again clearly of primary importance as the basis of the legitimacy of non-state organisations. The organisation of resistance to unpopular policies or branches of the state, as well as the organisation of assistance to meet the needs of the community, were important aspects of community organising. Whereas in Burma, the desperate situations of communities in terms of repression and deprivation could make community organising seem like a means to the more immediate ends of resistance or assistance, for the Philippines groups, the organisation of resistance and assistance were clearly integrated into a long-term strategy of community organising.

Opposition organisations in the Philippines use communication to mobilise support from base communities and to encourage potential activists to join the organisation. Anakbayan, the youth wing of the BAYAN movement, describe their primary purpose as being to 'arouse, organise and mobilise the Filipino youth for the national democratic aspirations of the Filipino people' (interview 1, 2008). The chairperson of Anakbayan emphasised the role of ideas and experience in motivating youth to get involved and take action for political change. Anakbayan's programs of alternative education and 'basic masses integration', designed to expose youth activists to the realities of life for the urban and rural poor, are therefore crucial aspects of their organising programme. These programmes seek to develop the political consciousness of youth activists and their attachment to the organisation. 'It starts with some observations, curiosity, a sense of awareness, then it could lead to some political consciousness, which will be more systematic if you are a part of the organisation' (interview 1, 2008). The program of alternative education is also a form of direct action, gaining legitimacy for the organisation by efforts to directly realise their goals for nationalist, 'pro-people', and scientific education, without waiting for the state to deliver it. The organisation's view is that the need for popular education 'will not just begin when the state performs its role, so we have our own initiatives and activities that we do now' (interview 1, 2008). The ultimate aim of organising

youth for Anakbayan is to develop activists to take part in campaigns and mass struggles which 'involve taking up the issues of the basic masses and advancing their interests and welfare' (interview 1, 2008). Therefore, the legitimacy of the organisation with regards to its membership depends largely on its degree of success in creating opportunities to become involved in politics and to learn the skills and political analysis necessary for being a political activist. The organisation also has a broader legitimacy with regards to the general population, which depends on the degree to which its members are visibly involved in political campaigns and outreach work with relevance to ordinary people.

The importance of popular education for building the legitimacy of community-based organisations is also emphasised by the KMU union federation. The general secretary of the KMU described the popular education carried out by the federation as operating on three levels of analysis. The first level is designed to introduce the concept of rights, which gives legitimacy to union activities and de-legitimises government repression. The second level is concerned with the politics of government and includes discussion of international politics and sovereignty, in order to place the economic problems of the Philippines in an international context. The third level involves developing an analysis of social and political change, together with a vision of an alternative social and political order as an orientation for collective action (interview 5, KMU).

Organisations are also able to build legitimacy through communication by working to resolve communal and intercommunal conflicts. In seeking regional unity among the different peoples of the Cordillera, the CPA had to find strategies to overcome the many intercommunal conflicts which would occasionally erupt into warfare between neighbouring groups. One strategy that was used to achieve this was to convene a council of elders from member communities who are recognised as influential 'in the natural course of their leadership and respect and credibility and service to the community' (interview 3, 2008). By facilitating solutions to intercommunal conflicts, the CPA gained legitimacy. This was especially true in the case of an institution such as the elders' council, where the CPA could tap into an existing source of legitimacy by gaining the support of legitimate leaders of the community. As these examples from the Philippines show, the political values of the organisation – self-determination and defence of ancestral lands – only make sense when situated in the particular context of concrete relationships with the land and people. Likewise, the legitimacy of the organisation in the community is not measured in abstract terms in relation to goals and outcomes, but is situated within concrete social relations and practices which make up the organisational repertoire of the group. Over time, as CPA activists have demonstrated commitment and practical solidarity

for local causes, the legitimacy of the organisation in local communities has grown (interview 3, 2008).

Conclusion

Community-based opposition organisations develop political legitimacy based on popular consent, illustrated in this chapter through the cases of Burma and the Philippines. More specifically, the consensual legitimacy of CBOs is based on sustained reciprocal relationships between the organisation and the community. These relationships take time to build and are based on the development of a shared history of political struggle. In particular, organisations gain consensual legitimacy when they enable the community to resist oppression, gain assistance to meet their needs, and establish positive channels of communication between the organisation and the community. Consensual legitimacy is the basis for the power of opposition organisations, as it enables them to count on the practical and political support of a community. In situations where the state is seen as an oppressive force, opposition CBOs are able to mobilise on the basis of consensual legitimacy to challenge the legitimacy of the state. The following chapter turns to this dynamic to understand how and why non-state actors in Burma and the Philippines are mobilising challenges to the legitimacy of the governments of those countries.

3

Resisting Oppression: The Everyday Politics of Challenges to State Legitimacy

State regimes, by definition, are based on hierarchical power relationships between governing decision-makers and governed subjects. As a consequence of this political hierarchy, power must be constituted through the consent of the governed in order for a state to enjoy a broad level of regime legitimacy. Following the typology set out by Nincic (2005, 13), if states are defined by '*whom* they govern', and a government 'by *who* is governing', we can define a state regime as '*how* and *why* a government governs'. Likewise, the study of regime legitimacy is not simply about 'who' is governing and 'whom' is being governed, but instead centres on the rightfulness and – crucially – the *social validity* of how and why a government governs.

This leads to the question of how to measure popular consent and hence establish the legitimacy of state power. In contrast to rationalist approaches (see Levi, *et al.*, 2009), which define legitimacy narrowly in terms of 'value-based legitimacy' ('a sense of obligation or willingness to obey authorities') that quasi-automatically translates into 'behavioural legitimacy' ('compliance with governmental regulations and laws'), processes of legitimation are understood in this thesis as broader political dynamics that encompass not just a willingness to comply with formal procedures but also a practical process whereby non-state actors must confer legitimacy upon a state through *consent* (cf. Seabrooke 2006, 9-12). The approach to consensual legitimacy developed in previous chapters follows Weber (1978) in arguing that studying legitimacy in terms of consent requires an inquiry into the meaning of social action and hence the motivations of actors – not just the assumed social validity (or lack thereof) of governmental actions and issues of procedural justice. The motivations of non-state actors in contesting or consenting to state power and in constructing alternative projects of political legitimacy are therefore of central importance. In particular, an analysis of the legitimacy of a state in terms of popular consent requires an investigation of the practices of everyday politics within which state-society relations are situated and reproduced (Migdal 1988, 24-33). In this chapter, the approach to political

legitimacy developed in the foregoing discussion, based on relations of political consent, is applied to an analysis of challenges to state legitimacy in Burma and the Philippines.

State legitimacy is conceptualised as a special case of political legitimacy, defined as a property of power relations based on consent. Studying the legitimacy of states in terms of power relations between governors and governed both requires and contributes to an analysis of the state as embedded in social relations. Legitimacy has both a descriptive and a normative content as it deals with the issue of consent, which operates at the intersection of belief and practice. These theoretical considerations open several empirical lines of enquiry for studying political legitimacy in practice. Social practices involved in the construction and contestation of state legitimacy include: state policies and practices which mobilise people to consent to state power, or provoke dissent (Alagappa 1995); the organised politics of non-state groups which mobilise consent or dissent towards state power (Boudreau 2004); and the everyday politics of people's lives which either engage with or circumvent state power (Kerkvliet 2005; Thawnghmung 2004).

Popular consent – which forms the basis of political legitimacy – is embodied in the norms of everyday politics. Even in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, the capacity and stability of the state can be limited by popular opposition activity that challenges the legitimacy of the regime (Horne 2009, 37-50). As Lyall (2006) argues, even authoritarian states rely on public forms of rhetorical legitimation which can be exploited by opposition groups highlighting inconsistencies between the policies and practices of the regime. Faced with popular challenges to their legitimacy, state agencies choose between strategies of coercion and legitimation to seek compliance, with most agencies choosing hybrid strategies most of the time (Lyall 2006, 378-380).

Opposition activists in both Burma and the Philippines blame the state for failing to meet the needs of the people, particularly for education and economic development. In doing so, opposition activists are invoking popular expectations which they are also involved in mobilising and constructing. From this common base of concerns, groups from the two countries diverge in the ways they frame the issues of education and development and hence the character of the solutions they propose. By setting education and development as standards by which to judge the present state, opposition groups are also making claims about the ability of a rival political order to perform better in these areas. Again, groups from Burma and the Philippines diverge in the form of political order they advocate, based on their own political circumstances and traditions. In both countries, regardless of the particular form of the state, meeting the people's needs for education and economic development is a key requirement for the state to establish popular legitimacy.

Opposition community-based organisations in Burma and the Philippines describe the state as a hostile force, responsible for military and political repression of activists and their base communities. These charges are highly significant for consideration of state legitimacy as they provide both a motivation for popular opposition to the state and an explanation for how the state maintains its power in the absence of consensual legitimacy. Where state elites are unable to rely on popular consent in the daily exercise of government, they fall back on coercion and repression to maintain effective power. This pattern of repression is repeated in various forms and to varying degrees through the two case studies. Repression in both Burma and the Philippines has occasioned international condemnation and damaged the international legitimacy of these states.

Regional recognition and support has been important for the SLORC/SPDC regime in Burma, as it has faced strong condemnation from Western countries led by the USA and EU as well as multilateral organisations (BBC 2007; Salai Pi Pi 2009). Membership in ASEAN, as well as bilateral relations with its neighbours, has been important for the regime to maintain some degree of moral and practical support in shoring up its contested international legitimacy. Of Burma in 2002, Clark (2003, 130) was able to write: 'The beginnings of political legitimacy for Burma can largely be attributed to its membership in ASEAN'. ASEAN countries have, however, been increasingly unwilling to offer unqualified support to the regime. The level of criticism of Burma within ASEAN reached the point that, when it was Burma's turn to take the chair of ASEAN in 2005, the Junta decided to forgo this right (James 2006, 165). According to a joint statement released after the 2006 ASEAN ministerial, delegates 'expressed concern on the pace of the national reconciliation process and hope to see tangible progress that would lead to peaceful transition to democracy in the near future', and reiterated 'calls for the early release of those placed under detention and for effective dialogue with all parties concerned.' (ASEAN 2006) While the statement was very mildly worded, it represented a significant departure from ASEAN's usual policy of not making public comment on the internal affairs of member states.

The focus in this chapter, however, is on the effect that state repression has in shaping the relationship between the state and the communities within its borders. To the extent that the state-society relationship becomes characterised by repression, consensual legitimacy is precluded and replaced by coercion. The situation in Burma is an extreme case, in which the state functions almost entirely as a coercive and repressive apparatus. However, this political closure can never be entirely complete and even in the case of Burma the survival of the regime depends on the tacit consent of sections of the

populations, together with the reluctant compliance of others (Thawnghmung 2004).

Unlike the SPDC regime in Burma, the Philippines government under recent administrations has not faced any significant international challenges to its legitimate existence or to its participation in international bodies. On the basic standard of recognition then, the Philippines regime is accorded international legitimacy. With regard to more substantive international norms, the international reputation of the regime has been somewhat tarnished by domestic challenges to the legitimacy of the regime, in particular, challenges based on military repression and abuses of human rights. While not as extreme or as generalised as in the case of Burma, politically targeted repression is also much in evidence in the Philippines, effectively undermining the government's claims to popular legitimacy. Reports by states and international human rights organisations have linked sections of the armed forces of the Philippines to extra-judicial killings, disappearances, and other abuses of human rights (Amnesty International 2006; USA Department of State 2008). Campaigners in the Philippines report that international pressure on the Philippines was significant enough to compel action by the President, resulting in a reduction in reported human rights violations (interview 1, 2008).

This chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, I examine the sources of state legitimacy through an exploration of the role of religion, nationalism, and patronage networks. The second section analyses the motivations for non-state actors to contest state legitimacy, focusing on the failure of the state to effectively provide basic public goods as well as threats to community safety through military oppression. The third and final section of this chapter discusses the processes and practices employed by non-state actors to challenge state authority through everyday politics.

The Politics of Regime Legitimacy in Burma and the Philippines

The sources of regime legitimacy are manifold and may vary both across different societies and within the same society at different points in time. Potential sources of legitimation for an incumbent regime are not without risk, and can often serve as a double-edged sword. For example, some of the most salient sources of actual or potential regime legitimacy in Burma and the Philippines include the role of religion, democratic elections, national identity, and patronage networks, each of which is discussed in further detail below. Yet each of these possible sources of legitimacy may also open a regime to political entrapment by opposition activities, whereby elite strategies to pursue legitimation are effectively turned back against the regime itself (see Lyall 2006).

For many societies, regime legitimacy now rests – first and foremost – on the holding of free elections at regular intervals, which result in peaceful changes in government.

Democratic elections can be thought of in this respect as a 'fundamental institution' (cf. Reus-Smit 1997) of political legitimacy within international society, to the extent that even authoritarian regimes have attempted to exploit the appearance of democratic legitimacy. The danger for an authoritarian regime attempting to represent itself as an elected government is twofold, and results from the overarching possibility that, by flirting with democracy, a regime risks endorsing the validity of democratic principles among the wider population. First, direct manipulation of elections through vote-buying, intimidation, and fraud may backfire on a regime by provoking popular protest that effectively invalidates the election result (as occurred in the 1986 Philippines election called by President Marcos). Second, there is a risk for a regime that it may easily overestimate its own control over the population in assuming that an election can be won by the incumbent rulers through coercion and oppression of the opposition (such as the 1990 election held in Burma, where campaigning by opposition parties was severely restricted, and yet the parties allied with the opposition National League for Democracy still won a majority of seats).

Of the two case studies examined in this thesis, the Philippines has been notably more successful than Burma in claiming the mantle of legitimacy as a 'democratic' state. Burma has been under continuous military government since 1962, when General Ne Win's coup overthrew the elected government and installed a Revolutionary Council run by the Burmese Socialist Programme Party. Despite its name, the party had no mass base and represented 'essentially a small military oligarchy' (Silverstein 1977, 88). The 1972 constitution was written by the BSPP to confirm their power, creating a unitary state under one party rule; a 'constitutional dictatorship' (Silverstein 1977, 124). In the 1990 elections, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won 392 out of 484 seats, of which 100 members of parliament have been stripped of their status by military decree, 40 have been imprisoned and 20 exiled (Matthews 1999, 83). According to Chao-Tzang Yawnghwe (1995, 172) the elections were a 'clear contest for the mandate to rule'. He explicitly links the election to the concept of popular sovereignty: 'The election was certainly viewed by the opposition, as well as by the military, as a test of legitimacy. Both accepted the electorate as the final arbiter: the sovereign people would decide who had the right to rule'.

Nevertheless, the Junta refused to accept the results of the elections as legitimating a new civilian government led by the NLD. Instead, SLORC (which was renamed the SPDC in 1997) declared – after the fact – that the elections had been for a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution, and that the military would stay in power to oversee this process. In 1992 the NLD walked out of the National Convention discussions of a new constitution which would have allowed them only 15 percent representation in the new parliament

(Matthews 1999, 84). Although the regime has persisted with a lengthy National Convention process – at the same time as the military's position in the country's politics and in economic activity has become further entrenched (Min 2008) – the NLD continues to boycott the talks until all its members are able to participate and restrictions on the agenda are lifted. In 2005, they were joined in the boycott by Shan organisations. Other representatives of ethnic nationalities, including the Karen National Union, were barred from participation by their continuing conflict with the regime (James 2006, 163).

As well as democratic elections, organised religion, with strong community roots and beliefs that are widely held among a population, can also play a crucial role in the construction of political legitimacy. Yet religious authority can work against a state regime just as easily as it can be made to work for it, especially in cases where a religion and religious leaders enjoy a broader and more durable form of legitimacy political elites. In short, 'Religion may be used to legitimate governments as well as those who oppose them' (Fox 2001, 65-6). In addition to often enjoying broader social legitimacy than a state regime, organised religious groups often control significant resources that can be employed strategically for political mobilisation, including 'membership networks, leadership structures, building space, [and] institutionalized patterns of financial contributions' (Williams 1996, 885). Because of the intimate relationship between religion and culture, religious beliefs may shape the environment in which the political legitimacy of a regime is contested, as well as 'shaping a repertoire or "toolkit" of habits, skills and styles from which people construct "strategies of action"' (Swidler 1986, 273).

In the two cases examined here, both the Buddhist Sangha in Burma and the Catholic Church in the Philippines constitute important sources of non-state legitimate authority. In an attempt to take advantage of their broad social legitimacy, state regimes and particular governments in both countries have made numerous attempts to ally themselves with religious authority, with varying degrees of success.

In Burma, Buddhism as the majority religion has historically provided the primary structure of political legitimacy for the lowland kingdoms of the Burmese, Mon, Shan, and Arakanese (Jordt 2003; Scott 2010; South 2003, 57-61). The place of religion in the official ideology of the Burmese state has gone through several stages since independence, from a central place as the official religion in the 1950s to a more marginal yet still officially recognised status under Ne Win's military and Socialist Programme Party rule (Jordt 2003). However, as Jordt (2003) argues, religion has played a consistently important role in informal elite politics and in the attempts of regime actors to gain public legitimacy through engagement with the everyday politics of religion. State elites have cast themselves in the

role of legitimate rulers by adopting the practices of Buddhist kingship and have attempted to gain public as well as religious merit through conspicuous offerings and religious works, such as the elaborate renovations of the Shwedagon pagoda. Such elite practices have not prevented Buddhist monks becoming a strong source of either overt or covert resistance to the legitimacy of the regime, both in the case of the most recent mass protests for democracy in 2007 (stimulated by smaller initial protests against fuel price rises) and in earlier episodes. For example, independent and underground monks' associations in Burma became powerful supporters of the pro-democracy movement in 1988 (International Crisis Group 2001, 17). Likewise, in 1986 the 'people power' popular uprising against the Marcos regime in the Philippines was sparked in part by a call by Cardinal Sin, the head of the Catholic Church in the country, — for public protests in support of military units rebelling against the President (Alagappa 1995, 47; Philpott 2004; Ofreneo 1987).

Rather than attempting to 'anchor' regime legitimacy in the legal processes and formal institutions of the state, as is more usual in established democracies, it is common for more authoritarian governments to legitimise their rule through rhetorical claims and the generation of new political discourses (see Lyall 2006, 383). In terms of elite rhetorical practices to claim a mantle of regime legitimacy, nationalist 'Burman' discourses remain an especially important strategy for Burma's military leaders to foster a common ethnocentric 'national' identity based on the Burman dominant majority ethnic group. As an important illustration of these strategies, the 'Three Main National Tasks' of the SPDC are explicitly articulated in an official document entitled 'Endeavours of the Myanmar Armed Forces Government for National Reconciliation' (cited in Grundy-Warr and Wong Siew Yin 2002, 99). These three explicit strategic tasks include: (1) to ensure 'Non-disintegration of the Union'; (2) to ensure 'Non-disintegration of National Unity'; and (3) to ensure the 'Preservation of National Sovereignty'. Each of these elements of nationalist discourse reflects the strong preoccupation of Burma's leaders with 'national sovereignty and [an] emotional attachment to the nation (or rather to the state, which is seen as the embodiment of the nation)' (International Crisis Group 2001b, 4).

As Lyall (2006, 384) points out, symbolically important rhetorical claims such as these can sometimes lead to the entrapment of a regime within its own discursive framework, which highlights the importance for regime legitimacy of publicly defending the reputation of the ruling elite. An example of this can be seen in the SPDC's presentation to a 2001 UN conference on the Least Developed Countries, when the SPDC gave itself a glowing report on achievement of the National Tasks, stating: 'These endeavours have resulted in considerable and tangible achievements that include, among others, peace and stability of

the state, accelerated growth of the economy and alleviation of poverty through socio-economic development of the country, especially in the remote and border areas' (Soe Tha 2001). Furthermore, official statements in the state-run newspaper *New Light of Myanmar* emphasise the role of the military in 'holding the country together' and, through ceasefire agreements with insurgent groups and border development policies, bringing all the 'national races' back into the 'legal fold' (cited in Grundy-Warr and Wong Siew Yin 2002, 99-100). While it is difficult to objectively judge the degree of and depth of resonance that such rhetorical claims about national identity have in an authoritarian regime such as Burma, with a population of approximately 50 million people, these claims did not resonate for any of the broad range of activist participants – representing a cross-section of Burmese society from different age cohorts, ethnicities, occupational backgrounds, and gender differences – who were interviewed in this study.

In the contemporary era, political legitimacy has attained an intimate relationship with the *effectiveness* of state action. 'Effectiveness' in this sense can be defined solely in terms of the adequate provision of basic public goods (such as access to education, employment opportunities, a minimum standard of living, and personal security), regardless of regime type (such as democratic or authoritarian), or it may also be related to the process of governance itself. The fact that many states in the Asia region have combined economic growth with authoritarian forms of government has led some scholars to suggest state performance as a key source of legitimacy (Means 1996; Park 1991). Other scholars have treated political legitimacy and economic performance as distinct but related factors in predicting regime stability. In his seminal article on the 'social requisites of democracy', for example, Lipset (1959, 100) distinguishes between two dimensions of what he refers to as 'the struggle for citizenship': (1) political rights, including access to power; and (2) economic rights, especially with respect to economic opportunities, freedom of association, and development. In mounting an argument for the inclusion of effectiveness (defined as governmental performance in relation to economic development and living standards, as well as educational standards) *with* political legitimacy as two central requirements for a successful and sustainable democracy, many of Lipset's (1959, 86) earlier findings also resonate in contemporary cases such as Burma and the Philippines, where regime legitimacy is commonly challenged by non-elite actors on the basis of government failure to effectively respond to the fundamental social and economic challenges facing these societies.

A further important potential source of political legitimacy is the ability of a regime to effectively 'buy' support from a particular section or sections of the population through

patronage. In this respect, *patrimonial* regimes are commonly associated with the allocation of material rewards – through both formal and informal mechanisms – in exchange for loyalty and obedience to a ruler or ruling elite. A patrimonial regime is therefore 'based not only on patriarchal values and norms, but on rationally driven exchange of services, when a patron buys the loyalty of a client in exchange for protection of the client's interests' (Ilkhamov 2007, 66). In particular, rather than the universal (or near-universal) provision of public goods by the state (defined as *non-exclusive* services and benefits), in a patronage-based regime, characterised by deep political and economic inequalities, political support may be traded by particular social groups in exchange for access to exclusive public goods that are denied to others (see Collins 2004, 233). In Burma, for example, state-owned enterprises dominated by the country's military leaders act as economically inefficient 'patronage vehicles for the SPDC', with collective losses in 2006-07 that have been estimated by the International Monetary Fund as equalling more than 23 percent of the country's total tax revenue (Turnell, *et al.* 2009, 641). The pattern of patronage extends to the local level, structuring relations between local elites and communities.

As Scott (1972) argues in a study including the Philippines, many features of electoral and bureaucratic politics in Southeast Asia cannot be understood without an analysis of the role of patron-client relations in both resource distribution and face-to-face interactions. Kerkvliet (1995) supports this basic thesis, while sounding the cautionary note that patronage should be understood as one factor within a more comprehensive theory of politics in the Philippines, and not as a single variable explaining all forms of political action. In addition to the economic rewards implied in patron-client relations, however, the effect of patronage can be as much in the ritualistic importance of engagement between patron and client as in any material benefit being exchanged. When patronage takes on this kind of symbolic function, it can be extended to a national scale, for example in the expression of personal concern by the President for the grievances of the population or of a particular group (Suhrke 1971, 134). In a review of democratic reforms in the Philippines, Eaton (2003) shows how efforts to reform the electoral process to reduce the dominance of traditional oligarchies have had mixed results. On the one hand, space for representation of marginalised groups has been opened by the allocation of reserved party list seats in congress as well as by measures to reduce some of the more overt forms of dominance by landowning dynasties. On the other hand, the 'traditional politicians' drawn from the elite class of landowners and merchants have maintained dominance in the government, in part by accommodating reform processes while working to minimise or subvert their effect.

Patronage also emerged as a key issue in the 2010 election campaign in Burma, where

candidates for the regime-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) openly used state funds to exchange concessionary loans and local development projects for advance votes for the party (Ellgee 2010). However, an effect of patron-client structures in electoral politics is that voting is treated as a matter of communal rather than individual interest. In one village in Shan state visited by Ellgee the community had decided collectively to vote for the opposition Shan Nationalities Democratic Party, but to also allocate a block of votes to the USDP to avoid repercussions after the election[10].

Contesting State Legitimacy: Motivations

The absence of consensual legitimacy in present relationships between the state and communities in both Burma and the Philippines is characterised by opposition groups in terms of a series of problems, which either relate to the failure of the state to provide universal access to basic public goods, or are a direct consequence of state coercion and oppression. Activists discuss the needs of the community that the state is failing to provide for, as well as challenges for their communities that are directly caused by state policy and actions. The two categories of unequal provision of public goods that emerged from the analysis of interviews as the most important judgements of state illegitimacy were a lack of *education* and a lack of *economic opportunity*. The most significant categories of problems caused by the state that emerged from the analysis were described in terms of *political oppression* and *military oppression*. These four aspects of the popular judgement of state illegitimacy – the lack of education and economic opportunity and the problems of political and military oppression – are discussed in the following sections.

Lack of Education

The results of the Burma case study paint a picture of an education system in a state of collapse. Participants in this study identified a lack of adequate education in their various communities and linked this to their views of the SPDC regime, which was described as generally hostile towards public education. Aspects of the state's approach to education which were identified included: systematic discrimination against women and ethnic minorities; general neglect and lack of resource provision; and widespread destruction,

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[10] The persistence of communal decision-making within formally individualised processes of representative democracy is discussed by Chatterjee (2001) in connection with his distinction between 'political society' and 'civil society' in postcolonial regimes. For a discussion of communal representation which is particularly instructive of the trends which may influence a post-democratic Burma see Ghai (2002).

closure, and political repression of educational institutions by police and military forces.[11]

Systematic discrimination against women in education and structural inequalities present major barriers to women's participation in higher education in Burma. For example, a member of the Mon Women's Organisation reported that men were given priority over women for university entrance, even where their test scores were equal. In effect, women had to pass a higher standard to gain entrance to higher education (interview 30, 2006). Another participant linked the lack of education for women to the economic and social hardships faced by women, saying that women were 'not learning a lot, because of their struggle for their life' (interview 13, 2006). To these participants, the state was failing to adequately or equally promote the education of women and, in fact, state educational institutions were adding barriers of discrimination to women's participation in education.

Burmese youth suffer from a general lack of access to higher education. Non-Burman ethnic minorites in particular suffer from discrimination in the education system. One participant from the All Arakan Student and Youth Congress described the lack of resources provided by the government for schools in his area. This included a lack of qualified teachers, while all learning materials have to be provided by parents or relatives. School buildings are derelict and not weatherproof, so classes have to be cancelled in poor weather. There is also a lack of high schools in rural areas, with this participant describing how he moved three times to bigger towns, staying with relatives, in order to continue his education (interview 1, 2006). In the bigger cities, students from minority ethnic groups face discrimination in both education and employment. In criticising the state for failing to provide adequate resources for education, participants were setting this as a standard of legitimacy which the state was failing to meet.

The state education system is commonly described as corrupt and as generally discriminatory against anyone who is not an active supporter of the military regime. Participants describe how authorities have created a two-tier education system, with most

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[11] The issues outlined here accord with many of those raised as concerns by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2004). In the report on Myanmar approved at its 36th session in 2004 the committee noted that it was 'seriously concerned at the following problematic aspects of the existing education system:
(a) The low quality of education reflected in the high repetition and dropout rates, which affect more girls than boys;
(b)The significant variation in school enrolment between urban and rural areas, and the particularly low level of enrolment of children belonging to minority groups;
(c) The limited length of compulsory education, which ends at the fourth grade;
(d) Free primary education is not guaranteed in practice, as parents are required to cover the costs of uniforms, textbooks, stationery and other supplies; and
(e) The majority of schools in Myanmar do not provide a conducive learning environment for children owing to, inter alia, the poor conditions of buildings, the poor quality of teaching/learning methodologies and the shortage of qualified teachers' (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2004, para. 62).

of the meagre resources available for education reserved for military-run schools. 'If you compare somebody who has a relationship with the military regime and us, we cannot compete with them, because of the corruption. People who can pay a lot of money can get better education from them' (interview 32, 2006). Corruption in the education system at the local level is also evident, with this participant describing how there is little motivation to study for exams because the answers were often available for sale from teachers.

Participants emphasised the detrimental effect on education of the presence of central government troops in their areas. Two members of different ethnic youth organisations described how SPDC soldiers had destroyed schools and forbidden education in the native language of the areas (interviews 32 and 28, 2006). When people were forced to flee their villages, education for the children of the village was disrupted. The effect on education was one of the problems that participants emphasised in discussing forced displacement (e.g., interviews 12, 32, 2006). This emphasis on education was especially striking given the context of forced displacement, where the entire life of the community was under threat. In this case, the state was seen as illegitimate because the actions of the state military constituted an active barrier to the education of the people.

The actions of the SPDC regime towards education and students led several participants to suggest that the regime was threatened by education. One participant from a women's organisation said that 'the regime is worried that the people will be educated and against them, so they relocate their campuses, the universities, they close down universities' (interview 25, 2006). This statement epitomises the feeling expressed by many participants that the current regime in Burma was generally opposed to education and that the regime saw an educated population as a political threat. Several participants who had experienced the events of 1988 described how the military government of the time had reacted to student protests by shutting down the universities and sending students home (interviews 2 and 3, 2006). Others reported that this pattern had continued up to the present, whenever the regime felt threatened by student organising (interviews 1 and 23, 2006). Participants presented these official actions as evidence that the regime was actively hostile towards education, which they saw as an important public good.

Participants discussed their personal experiences of education in Burma in ways that are revealing of their judgements of state legitimacy. One participant from a youth group described the poor standard of education in Burma as a motivation for leaving the country to seek better opportunities in Thailand. He described an education system in which

students were not allowed or encouraged to have their own opinions (interview 4, 2006). Several participants went further and described a lack of opportunity for education as a personal motivation to join groups opposing the government. One member of an armed group described his decision to become a soldier in these terms: 'At the time I learn I live in the [refugee] camp, so have no freedom, no job, no chance to continue at the high school. When I finished tenth standard it is end for me. So I have no chance. So I know that for me, I am Karen people, we are Karen people. We must have freedom, we must have nation' (interview 20, 2006). Statements like these are political as well as personal and are especially relevant to judgements of state legitimacy, since an explicit link is made between criticism of the education system and political action to oppose the state.

In the Philippines, participants described a public education system which was suffering from government underfunding and what the opposition groups saw as skewed priorities which favoured foreign commercial interests over the educational needs of Filipino people. According to the President of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), education remained inaccessible for the majority of families in the country. Even families that were able to educate their children were struggling to pay tuition fee increases at government schools (interview 6, 2008). The incremental withdrawal of state subsidies for public education was seen as part of a process of commercialisation of education, whereby private education providers were expanding to fill the gap left by the state. The consequent lack of free public schools was having a serious impact on access to education for the majority of the population. Many schools would refuse to allow students who forfeited on fee payments to sit their exams – the so-called 'no permit, no exam' policy – meaning that even some students who managed to finish school would not officially graduate or receive any qualification (interview 6, 2008).

A lack of government schools in rural areas adds the barrier of distance to the difficulties of participation in education (interview 1, 2008). The government was seen as failing to address the problem of 'out of school youth' (interview 1 and 6, 2008). As the chairperson of the national youth organisation Anakbayan commented, the lack of access to education for youth had flow-on social effects for an already vulnerable population: 'They're not in school, they're not employed, they're just around. So a lot of them really don't have a sense of direction' (interview 1, 2008). Both NUSP and Anakbayan blamed government education policy for failing to respond to the lack of education for the majority of the population. Both organisations cited this policy failure in calling for the removal of the Arroyo administration and for structual change in the political system.

The NUSP and Anakbayan shared an analysis of government education policy in the

Philippines as being guided by a colonial mentality based on subservience to foreign economic interests. School and university curricula were seen as oriented towards producing workers for low-level service jobs with foreign companies operating in the Philippines (interview 1 and 6, 2008). Government policies were criticised by the student and youth organisations as being guided not even by economic rationality but rather by a feudal approach to education left over from Spanish and American colonial rule. According to this critique, there is no attempt by government to identify the national needs for skilled graduates – whether in health, education, or industry – and to orient the education system accordingly. This problem is seen as connected to the government's policy of exporting labour, which facilitates the migration of both skilled and unskilled workers in order for the state to benefit from remittances sent back to the Philippines.

International labour migration was first instituted as a major policy priority of the Philippines government in the 1974 Philippines Labour Code, as a response to economic problems such as a scarcity of foreign exchange earnings and high rates of unemployment. The policy subsequently led to the introduction of both punitive measures and positive incentives to encourage overseas Filipino workers to remit part of their income to their families in the Philippines through the banking system (Go 2003, 264-5). As a result of this policy, the Philippines now has the highest rate of outward migration relative to the size of its population in East and Southeast Asia, with over 8 million overseas Filipino workers in 2008 (representing one-quarter of the size of the domestic labour force) (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2008). Moreover, skilled workers such as doctors and nurses now account for more than a third of outward migrants, with the Philippines ranking as the world's third-highest recipient of remittances (in cash terms) in 2005, behind India and Mexico (Burgess and Haksar 2005). In recent years, the level of remittances to the Philippines has grown to reach the equivalent of more than 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and the Philippines is now firmly established as the world's largest net recipient of remittances relative to GDP (International Monetary Fund 2009, 14-15).

In stark contrast to the Philippines, survey evidence of remittances sent back to Burma by migrants in countries such as Thailand (often transferred informally through *hundi* schemes, which are similar to other examples of informal money transfer systems, such as '*hawala*' networks in Arabic-speaking countries), while large, are used primarily for the purposes of family and household survival, rather than having a broader developmental impact (Turnell, *et al.* 2008).

This deliberate policy focus by the Philippines government on exporting labour and

alleviating balance of payments pressures via the 'quick-fix' route of remittances, rather than tackling structural problems and a lack of employment opportunities in the domestic economy, represents an important source of political discontent in the country. In particular, rather than creating job opportunities for graduates and focusing the priorities of education on areas where graduates would find productive work in the Philippines, government policy is frequently criticised as perpetuating the status quo of under-development in both educational and economic terms. In contrast to state education policy, the alternative model of education proposed by both the NUSP and Anakbayan is described as 'pro-people, nationalist and scientific' (interview 1 and 6, 2008). The model of popular education advocated by these groups, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, is oriented towards meeting the social and economic development needs of the majority population of the Philippines. It is also based on a critique of existing state education policies as being oriented towards a model of economic and social development which is subordinated to foreign economic interests and benefits only a small minority of elite Filipinos.

Lack of Economic Opportunities

Like access to education, access to economic opportunities features prominently as a source of political legitimacy and contestation in Burma and the Philippines. Participants from Burma described a lack of economic opportunities for themselves and their communities, which in many cases amounted to a deprivation of the basic means of survival. Continuing economic underdevelopment and poor living standards in the country are attributed by activists and non-elite actors within the country, as well as by external academic observers, to the policies of the regime, in particular to poor economic management and the privileging of military spending over social welfare and economic development (for a recent assessment of the Burmese economy and economic management, see Turnell, *et al.*, 2009). Economic problems and regulatory inefficiencies in Burma abound in almost every sector of the economy, with major policy issues including an inefficient and corrupt multiple exchange rate regime, a weak tax base and inadequate revenue collection capacity, high inflation rates of between 30 percent and 50 percent annually (as a result of the central bank printing money to fill the government's budgetary shortfalls), erratic decisions on major public investment and capital spending programmes, as well as severe restrictions on trade, finance, and especially agricultural production (Tin Maung Maung Than 2007, 363-77; Turnell, *et al.* 2009; Wilson *et al.* 2008).

Several participants complained of a lack of appropriate jobs for university graduates. Participants linked this lack of economic opportunity to a series of negative social

consequences among students and graduates. Some students are being driven to prostitution to pay their tuition and living costs (interview 23, 2006), while many unemployed graduates are left suffering from depression and turn to drugs and alcohol to cope. Emotional responses to a lack of economic opportunities are also directed towards the regime, and are cited as a motivation for students and graduates to take part in anti-government protests.

In many societies, subsistence farming can serve as a crucial survival mechanism for rural populations, especially in countries undergoing rapid political and economic change or which suffer from adverse circumstances such as economic repression (cf. Kostov and Lingard 2002). Yet in the case of Burma, subsistence livelihoods in many rural areas have been made impossible as a result of SPDC military operations (see Malseed 2009). The widespread and systematic use of forced labour by SPDC military units, together with the confiscation of land, animals, and crops, has had a devastating economic impact on communities throughout Burma. Participants from communities in Mon, Arakan, Karen, and Kachin states all report similar patterns of economic exploitation of ordinary people by military divisions stationed in their areas. Forced labour is especially common in the construction or maintenance of military projects such as army camps and roads (interviews 1, 19, 21, 22, 25 and 27, 2006). Land and property, including plantations and factories, are frequently confiscated for economic projects for the sole benefit of the army (interview 5, 30 and 32, 2006). These forms of economic exploitation by the army were described as characterising the common practice of the regime, rather than representing a few isolated incidents. Forced labour and looting of private property are not seen as an isolated or corrupt local practice, but are rather blamed on policies and norms set by the central military command.

The practice of direct expropriation of private labour and property by the military set the general pattern of government economic policies experienced by participants. Government intervention in the economy was seen in one-way terms, as taking from the civilian population and giving nothing back. Farmers were forced to sell a set quantity of rice paddy to government-controlled purchase centres at prices below the cost of production. Farmers who were unable to meet the quota were liable to be arrested and beaten. Some farmers were therefore compelled to buy paddy at market rates in order to sell it to the government at the reduced price (interviews 13 and 15, 2006). Others who made a living from fishing or trading found that the cost of obtaining licenses was arbitrarily high and the process corrupt (interview 1, 2006). While this type of economic repression was partly blamed on local officials, the central government was held

responsible in general terms for the bureaucratic restrictions on everyday economic activity that made the local corruption possible.

In addition to the stifling restrictions of micro-economic activity, participants also held the central government responsible for the mismanagement of macro-economic policy. This was particularly evident in statements about economic development, which was seen as either entirely lacking or as being of no benefit to ordinary people. The regime was especially blamed for wasting the rich natural resources of Burma and for wasting the opportunity to use these resources for economic development of benefit to the broader population. Numerous studies have sought to examine the relationship between a rich endowment of exploitable natural resources in a country, political oppression, and regime stability, with Ross (2001, 336) observing that disputes between different groups over ownership rights with respect to a country's natural resources may be more prone to 'lead to larger military forces and less democracy in resource-rich, ethnically fractured states' (such as Burma). As one participant expressed it: 'The problem happened because of the government structure. There's a lot of natural resources in Burma. The authorities sold most of the natural resources overseas, not used for the public. Most of the money used for the weapons' (interview 5, 2006). This accusation, that the central regime diverts revenue from the exploitation of natural resources to the military and not for the public good, was repeated by many participants and is backed up by figures collated by the opposition movement (National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, 2004).

A similar grievance is that resources extracted from a particular region are not used to benefit that region. For instance, participants from Arakan state complained that major gas projects in their state did not benefit their people. Much of the gas is exported, with profits shared between foreign companies and the central government. In addition, Arakan opposition groups complained that a greater share of the electricity that is produced is diverted to Rangoon, while the capital of Arakan, Sittwe, receives only two hours of electricity per day, and rural areas none at all (interview 1, 2006).

Participants discussed economic problems in the context of a history of misdirected economic development, for which they blamed successive military regimes. From 1974 to 1988, the military-controlled Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP) ran a one-party government, which maintained strict control over a centrally-planned economy. However, as participants in this research pointed out, the military had little interest in aspects of socialist ideology emphasising social equality and development, but rather focused exclusively on maintaining authoritarian control of the state. In particular, participants blamed the BSPP regime for an economic crisis marked by rising prices and widespread

poverty in the 1980s.

In order for governments to achieve economic stability and to foster development, everyday actors must be able to have at least a minimal degree of confidence in core economic institutions, such as the value of a national currency as an everyday medium of exchange. As a consequence, fundamental changes in economic policies and conventions enacted by decree within any society can substantially erode regime legitimacy, in particular because '[e]conomic exchange relies on social relations of interpersonal trust' (Broome 2009, 9). For many households in Burma, the final straw came in 1987 when the regime responded to inflation by cancelling banknotes. Many families, already distrustful of the financial system, had kept their life savings in cash, which was rendered worthless overnight. The widespread anger and desperation caused by the 1980s economic crisis in Burma was therefore an important factor in the growing popular feeling during this period that the BSPP regime was illegitimate (interviews 2 and 15, 2006).

There is nothing pre-ordained about Burma's economic malaise during recent decades. At the time of independence in 1948, Burma had been one of the wealthier countries in South-East Asia, possessing abundant natural resources and producing a large surplus of rice and other products for export. But opposition groups blame the succession of military-dominated governments for economic policies that have seen Burma today become one of the poorest Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the world, while neighbouring countries such as Thailand and India have developed fast-growing and comparatively prosperous economies. Indeed, the policy lessons that can be drawn from comparisons with the growing wealth of their neighbours are not lost on opponents of the Burmese regime. For example, participants readily refer to the major discrepancies in living standards and economic development between Burma and Thailand as evidence of poor handling of the economy by the SPDC and previous regimes. This discrepancy is linked to economic migration, with the difference in wages between the two countries cited as a reason for leaving Burma in search of work in Thailand (interviews 4 and 5, 2006).

The economic motivations for popular opposition to regimes in Burma and the Philippines share some common sources, and are largely centred on the lack of local economic opportunities, economic underdevelopment, and the different strategic goals driving economic policymaking in each country. An important difference between each case, however, is that while the Burmese state is driven by the objectives of maintaining military control and resisting external interference, the economic strategy of the Philippines state is largely determined by a high level of dependence on loans and investment from the international financial institutions (and is thus shaped by the policy conditions that such

loans entail).

In the Philippines, the organisations in this study shared an analysis of the parlous economic conditions and were united in blaming successive governments for failing to implement beneficial economic development. The Secretary-General of BAYAN described the situation as a continuation of 'more than a hundred years of colonial and neo-colonial rule', which is characterised by 'backward agricultural feudal and semi-feudal conditions and power concentrated in the hands of the few, the economic and political elite'. According to this analysis, the 'major ills of contemporary society' in the Philippines were imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. These conditions of economic exploitation were 'represented by the Arroyo administration', which was seen as so hopelessly dependent on American interests that it was often referred to in derogatory terms by opposition activists as the 'US-Arroyo regime' (interview 2, 2008). While the general terms and language of this analysis are shared by the organisations in the study, the specific emphasis with respect to the perceived causes of the country's economic challenges depends on the experiences and concerns of each organisation's base community.

Besides education, the biggest issue faced by youth organisations in the Philippines is employment. This can be illustrated by the description by the Anakbayan chairperson of the consequences for youth of the government's economic policies: 'the few educated youth tends to go abroad to secure employment, while the majority of our youth will find themselves at a loss of how to get employment, whether locally or abroad' (interview 1, 2008). The problem of domestic unemployment and outward labour migration is blamed squarely on the government, which is seen as unconcerned with creating local employment and solely focused on how to 'facilitate the movement of the young people from here to other countries' in order to increase the volume of foreign exchange the country receives from remittances (interview 1, 2008). The government's labour export policy is also criticised by the Secretary-General of the KMU union federation, who describes the policy as part of the government's neoliberal economic policies of trade liberalisation, privatisation, and deregulation. According to the KMU, the majority of migrant workers under the government's labour export scheme are actually educated professionals, yet were often assigned to domestic or menial work (Baldonaza 2008).

In stark contrast to the Burmese regime, which has long sought to fiercely defend the country's sovereignty from external interference (International Crisis Group 2001b), the Philippines is closely integrated into the existing structures of global economic governance through its membership of – and dependence upon support from – the international

financial institutions. This serves as an important driver of political discontent directed against the state's 'neoliberal' economic orientation. For example, the government's neoliberal economic policies are seen by the KMU as connected to the Philippines' membership of international trade and finance regimes governed by the GATT/WTO and the international financial institutions (especially the International Monetary Fund). Unlike Burma, which often refuses to disclose even basic economic data to the IMF, the Philippines has spent much of the three decades prior to 2000 operating under back-to-back IMF loan programs (Seabrooke 2010). Moreover, the Philippines government continues to borrow heavily from the World Bank (with loans estimated at between US$700 million and US$1 billion for the 2009-2012 period), as well as maintaining close cooperation with the investment arm of the World Bank Group that promotes private sector financing, the International Finance Corporation (with additional investment for 2009-2012 expected to be approximately US$250-300 million per year) (International Monetary Fund 2010, 5).

The high level of dependence of the Philippines government on continued access to multilateral loans, and the consequent constraints these conditional lending arrangements impose on the country's economic policy autonomy, are widely seen by opposition groups as detrimental to the country's economic well-being and domestic development. For example, government policies are commonly described as having opened the country up to exploitation by international capital through the extraction of cheap resources and labour, with little investment in the infrastructure or industrial base of the economy. Despite the Philippines possessing the necessary labour force and natural materials to achieve development and support the population, the majority of the population live in absolute poverty with high rates of unemployment (Baldonaza 2008). These policies are associated with the dominance of the Philippines government by foreign, especially American, interests (either directly through the US-Philippines bilateral relationship, or indirectly through US influence over the IMF and the World Bank's activities). The economic policies of the government have been directly linked to judgements of popular legitimacy by the KMU Secretary-General, who claimed that 'it is clear that this is not a government of the people but of business and capital' (Baldonaza 2008).

In addition to the perceived negative effects of the country's economic policy orientation on the population in general, it is clear that the Philippines' continued underdevelopment and poverty has had a particularly severe impact on women. For example, the chairperson of the Gabriela network emphasised the effects on women in the Philippines of price rises in basic commodities such as rice. Sudden increases in food prices

were blamed on government deregulation of trade in agriculture, which had seen large-scale conversion of land from food crops to industrial cash crops. The Philippines had gone from being a rice exporter to being dependent on rice imports which were insufficient to meet demand, leading to rising prices. This is of particular concern to Gabriela members as '[i]n the Philippines, women have the role of being the one budgeting for the family. So it is a very big problem for them if there is not enough money to buy food for the children' (interview 4, 2008). Gabriela member organisations in rural areas also reported that women were being driven by economic necessity to exchange sex for rice. Although few women would openly admit to it, the prevalence of the practice was shown by the emergence of local terms to describe it, such as *Palimigas*, meaning 'rice barter' in Tagalog (interview 4, 2008). Another example of the gendered effects of commodity price rises in the Philippines is the disruption to women's everyday lives caused by the extra time required to spend queuing to buy subsidised rice. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter Two, Gabriela members further complain that the scheduling of rice distribution by local government officials has an uncanny tendency to fall on days when anti-government demonstrations have been called, disrupting the ability of women to attend the protests (interview 4, 2008).

Military Oppression

The dynamics of military oppression differ greatly between Burma and the Philippines, with the former characterised by widespread coercion and direct forms of local oppression, and the latter characterised more by 'covert' and less-direct forms of coercion and targeted oppression. These differences translate into distinct patterns of oppression of opposition movements, despite some similarities, and inform the different views that everyday non-elite actors have formed of the military in each case. For example, participants interviewed in this study from Burma view the state army, the *Tatmadaw*, as an oppressive *enemy* force, and blame the SPDC military regime for the abuse they regularly suffer at the hands of local military units. Opposition groups from different areas of Burma paint a consistent picture of a regime at war with its own people, which is consequently seen as an illegitimate government. Common abuses committed by the military against the population range from killings of civilians, rape, forced labour and conscription, looting and confiscation of property, and destruction of homes and crops.

Participants reported that a similar range of abuses against ordinary people occur wherever there are army bases, including in areas formally under ceasefire agreements, which indicates a systemic policy of military oppression whereby the military can act against local communities with impunity. Mon opposition groups interviewed in 2006 emphasised that human rights violations by the army had continued despite a 1995

ceasefire agreement between the SPDC and the New Mon State Party (NMSP). Participants reported systemic abuses such as rape by soldiers, land confiscation, and forced relocation of villages in the area. This situation has resulted in people being forced to flee their homes as Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Without any income or livelihood, and unable to gain entry into neighbouring countries as refugees, these IDPs are entirely dependent on organisations such as the NMSP for their survival (interviews 30 and 32, 2006). In Kachin state, despite a ceasefire agreement with the Kachin Independence Organisation, similar abuses were reported. The regime is also blamed for involvement in drug trafficking in the area, and for creating the conditions for widespread drug abuse, especially by Kachin youth (interview 9, 2006).

In addition to the interviews conducted for this study, other sources of evidence indicate that such abuses of the population by the military are neither isolated nor infrequent. Indeed, forced displacement of the population in Burma has reached disastrously high levels in recent years, with an estimated 500,000 Internally Displaced People on the country's eastern border just in the last decade. This led the International Committee of the Red Cross to publicly criticise the Burmese regime in 2007 for creating 'a climate of constant fear among the population' (cited in Brees 2008, 4). The pattern of abuse identified through the empirical research in this study is repeated and intensified in areas of active conflict. For instance, in Karen state, in the course of a long-running conflict with the Karen National Liberation Army, the *Tatmadaw* has systematically targeted the civilian population in an attempt to weaken its resistance. Contemporary abuses reported by participants included the systematic destruction of villages and crops, with villagers confined to their homes or forcibly relocated and cut off from their fields and food supplies (interviews 16, 21, and 25, 2006). These abuses have been official military tactics since General Ne Win introduced the 'four cuts' policy in 1962 to deprive the rebel Karen National Union of food, funds, intelligence, and recruits (Grundy-Warr and Wong Siew Yin 2002, 101). The impact of this army campaign against the civilian base of the Karen organisations is that ordinary people live in constant fear of government soldiers. One participant, a Karen youth organisation (KYO) member in his early twenties, described a lifetime spent as part of a community on the run from the government:

> I was born in the forest. I was born in 1983. At that time the SPDC came and attacked our village. Attacked the KNU. I grew up in the forest. When I grew up I recognised that whenever the SPDC troops entered the village they normally burnt down the village. At that time we also have to run away, leave our village and flee to the forest' (interview 27, 2006).

In discussing the impact of these attacks by government troops, participants described

many abuses against individuals, such as soldiers killing and wounding civilians. But participants also talked in as much detail and with as much emotion about the soldiers destroying villages and crops and killing farm animals (interviews 1, 16 and 25, 2006). One explanation for this focus on the non-human aspects of the military violence is that these were the often the acts which appeared to be most deliberately calculated to inflict collective punishment. Soldiers who systematically burnt rice barns and shot buffalo were seen as deliberately attacking the whole community. Such indiscriminate violence and destruction feeds local perceptions of a regime at war with the population. When asked about the main problems caused by the military presence in his area, one KYO member said: 'First they destroy the farms and the paddy fields, second they will burn down the whole of your village, thirdly they kill the villagers who they meet in the forest' (interview 28, 2006). The killing of individuals is seen as a part of a campaign of terror by an occupying military force against the local population. But the killing of individuals is not seen as the only, or even the primary, means used by the military to attack the collective existence of minority groups. The systematic attacks by the military on the material basis of collective life – crops, animals, cooking utensils, food stores, dwellings etc. – are just as much a part of an attempt at collective annihilation and are seen as such by the affected populations. The KYO member summed up his view of the motivations of the SPDC by saying: 'I see that they want to destroy our life, they want to kill all of the Karen people' (interview 28, 2006). If this statement were taken in isolation as a description of the killing of individuals it might seem to be hyperbole, but, taken in the context of broader descriptions of the *Tatmadaw* military campaigns against minority ethnic groups and the systematic destruction of the material basis of collective survival, the statement gains a more chilling sense of reality.

Participants in Burma describing the actions of individual soldiers and military units often referred to them by the initials of the regime, SPDC. Participants would refer to the SPDC as being responsible for particular abuses committed by soldiers and, conversely, would refer to abuses committed by soldiers when asked about their general impressions of the government. The central government was therefore strongly associated in the minds of local communities with the abuses committed against them by the state military forces. The abuses committed by local military units are thus seen as an extension of policies and norms set by the central regime, which is consequently seen as illegitimate by those suffering the abuse.

In contrast to Burma, military oppression in the Philippines is (comparatively) more covert, targeted, and less indiscriminate. For example, in April 2005 it emerged that the

Armed Forces of the Philippines had produced an internal training presentation called 'knowing the enemy', which listed various civil society and media organisations as fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines – New People's Army (CPP-NPA) (Cabacungan and Pazzibugan 2005). The groups listed included the Filipino organisations covered in this study, along with church groups and other organisations such as the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines. According to an Army Intelligence source quoted in the *Philippines Enquirer,* the military believed that the CPP-NPA had infiltrated the organisations named in the briefing as part of a plan to 'exploit the weaknesses of the democratic system' (Cabacungan and Pazzibugan 2005). The leaking of this presentation confirmed what the participants in this study already knew, that they were being targeted as part of the military's counter-insurgency campaign against the New People's Army. As the chairperson of Gabriela stated:

> Groups like us are being attacked as a front, a communist front. And so our leaders are also endangered because they have a reason to pick you up or to disappear you. So one issue that we have right now is human rights and political repression (interview 4, 2008).

The targeting of civil society groups as enemies of the state is not just an isolated case, or an example of poor public relations work by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, but is instead a consistent feature of the government's counter-insurgency program, known as Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL) (Karapatan 2009). The counter-insurgency campaign was presented by the government as part of the global war on terrorism (Arroyo 2001), and has been supported by the United States as part of Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (Maxwell 2004). But organisations such as Gabriela, whose members have been targeted by military units under the OPL, assert that the people whom the government now defines as terrorists are in fact ordinary political activists and even workers for service NGOs: 'These are ordinary civilians who have been working in non-government organisations, doing a lot of organising and providing services to the people who need them most' (interview 4, 2008).

Political Oppression

The history of political oppression in Burma and the Philippines forms an important third strand that – along with economic and military oppression – helps to explain everyday actors' contemporary motivations for engaging in resistance to the ruling regime in each case. Burmese participants describing political oppression by the SPDC, for example, often put this in the context of a long history of repressive government in Burma. In particular,

those involved in the events of 1988 referred to the military crackdown on peaceful protests as evidence of the regime's intolerance of dissent. Prior to 1988, the Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP) ran a one-party government which allowed no opposition. This led to a long-running political crisis in the 1980s as the BSPP regime maintained a socialist ideology that was in conflict with government practice, while enforcing order with 'draconian censorship laws' and arrest of people who criticised the government (interview 8, 2006). Student activists who organised anti-government protests at this time were motivated primarily by their experiences of political repression. Although the protests initially focused on demands for a government inquiry into police brutality, they quickly spread to a more widespread denunciation of the regime and demands for democracy. As one student organiser remembered it:

> To begin with, the protests were concerned with the student movement and the demands for the truth commission. But the military government didn't answer, so the protest continued. Every time there was a protest the demands grew but the government never answered. So finally we demanded democracy, a change to a democratic government and human rights (interview 3, 2006).

As this quote indicates, the inflexibility of the BSPP regime's response to political opposition caused a polarisation of the political situation and an escalation of the demands of the popular protest.

As participation in the 1988 protests grew, they became a focal point for a wide range of grievances against the government held by different sectors of the population across the country. In the cities, workers formed strike committees and demanded the right to organise unions free from political interference (interview 15, 2006). Participants who had joined the protests in rural areas reported that resentment of local authorities, poverty, economic restrictions, and widespread corruption were primary motivating factors. Local authorities in particular were seen as incompetent and self-serving, owing their appointment to the party hierarchy rather than to the people they governed (interviews 2 and 5, 2006).

The escalation of public protest gradually led to an expansion of the political goals that demonstrators pursued. In particular, as participation in the protests spread to more and more sectors of the population, the protest ceased to demand concessions from the regime and began instead to aim for its removal. This revealed the popular illegitimacy of the regime and created a systemic political crisis as the regime was forced to choose between making the transition to government with the consent of the people or relying on coercion to crush the protests. The choice of coercion over consent was made when a group of generals from the *Tatmadaw* launched a coup, taking control of the government and giving

the orders to brutally crush the protests (Lintner 1990). That approach has effectively continued to the present day, as the military regime has held on to power through repression and coercion, in the absence of popular consent.

In the Philippines, participants in this study also reported widespread political repression and corruption. Yet the character of this repression and the language used to describe it is affected in this case by the fact that the Philippines is formally a democracy. Compared to the situation in Burma, opposition groups have more freedom to organise within the country, and are even able to achieve representation in Parliament. While activists in the Philippines are opposed to the structure of the state as well as to particular governments, there is also a degree of qualified legitimacy given to certain aspects of state authority. For instance, in supporting particular election campaigns, or by taking part in congress hearings, activists confer legitimacy on these aspects of state authority. In discussing political and military repression, which both remain present in the Philippines and are especially targeted at political activists, participants tend to emphasise the political nature of the repression. Whereas military repression in Burma can be seen as indiscriminate and, in the case of abuses such as forced labour, part of the normal practice of the army, military repression in the Philippines tends to be seen by activists more as a deliberate tool of political repression.

It is important to note that engaging in political resistance in an environment that is characterised by a relatively greater degree of legal freedoms does not necessarily remove the threat of direct methods of state coercion and targeted political oppression. The relatively greater space for a legal movement in the Philippines, therefore, does not diminish the risks involved in political activism. Rather, activists are frequently subject to extra-judicial disappearances and killings, as well as politically-targeted arrests. The end of the Marcos period of martial law significantly opened the democratic space for groups to legally and openly organise, but as groups moved into this political space, the state responded with extra-judicial repression. Indeed, the Arroyo administration adopted tactics from the martial law era of extra-judicial killings and disappearances, with 1,188 cases of extra-judicial killing documented between 2001 and 2009 (Karapatan 2009). The main effect of the 'democratic transition' in the Philippines compared to the martial law period has been an increase in democratic space combined with a more or less constant level of state repression. While state repression has not declined in absolute terms, activists in effect have more freedom to act without triggering repression. However, the arbitrary nature of extra-judicial repression means that the government continues to be widely distrusted and is treated as a hostile force by opposition activists.

Challenging and Engaging the State

Groups organising inside Burma often evade political repression by finding creative ways to voice opposition to the regime in campaigns of political defiance. Acts of political defiance range from symbolic forms of everyday resistance to sabotage and overt challenges to state authority. Students in Arakan state, for instance, have taken part in a combination of overt and covert anti-government protest actions. Activists paint anti-government slogans, paste up printed posters, and distribute leaflets. Leaflets and posters denouncing the military regime are produced clandestinely using computer printers and quickly distributed. Student groups have also organised fora at the Sittwe University campus to discuss democracy and human rights. Such activities inevitably attract the attention of military intelligence, so activists have to carefully calculate the risks and be ready to leave town if they realise they are being watched (interview 1, 2006). In more rural areas, activists from the youth wing of the ALP encourage villagers to incorporate small acts of political defiance into their everyday lives:

> they can sing a song, they can pray every day. Day after day, if they practise in that way, people will be interested and they can share with other people, other villagers. So any kind of sign you can show that you don't like the government, in any way. This is political defiance for us.' (interview 11, 2006).

Acts of symbolic resistance are also used to raise support for more concrete acts of resistance. Trade union activists regularly cross the border from Thailand and have organised annual Mayday celebrations inside Burma. Celebrations have been combined with training on workers' rights and discussions about resisting abuses such as forced labour. After such discussions, some villages decided to resist government demands to grow castor seeds, which the regime sought to use for biofuel: 'we convinced some villages not to pay money for the seeds and also against growing the plants' (interview 15, 2006). When the village headmen were called by the army to explain their actions, the union activists encouraged them to go in groups for safety. In one case, an entire village accompanied their headman to the army base and in this way were able to return to their village unharmed. A month later, soldiers arrived in the village and forced the farmers to accept the seeds, putting an end to the resistance. However, such acts of overt resistance significantly slowed down the implementation of state directives in these areas and clearly showed the lack of legitimate authority on the part of the regime, which was forced to resort to military force in order to implement the most basic of agricultural policies (interview 15, 2006).

Union activists also operate secretly in urban areas, maintaining a network of members

and keeping in contact with union organisations on the border (interview 14, 2006). Occasionally, urban workers are able to organise more overt acts of resistance, despite the constant threat of state surveillance and repression:

> there are workers' activities in Rangoon and Pegu, but also the workers' activities are carefully watched, so also very difficult to do. But even so, workers' demonstrations and strikes are occasionally happening. At least one factory a month (interview 15, 2006).

These activities of everyday resistance constitute both an active challenge to state legitimacy and a demonstration of the political legitimacy of the opposition groups engaged in resistance.

In the Philippines, the organisations covered in this study overtly challenge the legitimacy of the state, not only calling for the removal of particular governments, but also for structural change in a political system which they see as illegitimate. Building on their experiences in the 'people power' revolutions that ousted former Presidents Marcos and Estrada, opposition organisations have called for a third people power movement to change the structure of the state (interview 2, 2008). One example of these efforts is a leaflet issued by BAYAN in 2008, and distributed widely in the Philippines, which explicitly targeted President Gloria Arroyo under the slogan 'Onward with a new People Power! Oust Gloria now!'. The leaflet recounts a series of corruption scandals involving the Arroyo administration, adding that the regime has 'subverted, blocked and rendered impossible all legal avenues to be made accountable'. Therefore, BAYAN claims, extra-constitutional measures are justified to end the 'illegitimate rule' of the President through popular mobilisation (BAYAN 2008). Although this campaign was personalised and directed against President Arroyo, drawing on the memory of earlier mobilisations against Marcos and Estrada, BAYAN makes it clear that 'the removal of a corrupt president is not enough for the needed socio-economic and political reforms to be implemented' (BAYAN 2008, 5). Rather, BAYAN calls for a transitional council which would introduce immediate economic reforms, initiate prosecutions for human rights abuses, begin peace talks with insurgent groups, and introduce electoral reforms before calling new elections (BAYAN 2008, 7). While the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) has not taken a definite position on the form of structural change that was required, it has voted as a body to call for the removal of President Arroyo from office. As the NUSP President put it:

> we're mature enough to know that it shouldn't just be a change of personalities, it shouldn't just be a change of the people within the government, it has to be an overhaul of the entire system. … But let me say that we think that there is a need

for immediate relief for the Filipino people by having this immediate change in leadership (interview 2008).

This statement, and the statements by BAYAN, show a rhetorical distinction being made between the legitimacy of the government administration and the legitimacy of the regime. This demonstrates one opportunity for a flexible political strategy afforded by the political system in the Philippines. The relative complexity and differentiation in the political system, compared to that of Burma, can potentially be exploited by non-state actors to target campaigns at challenging the legitimacy of one branch of the state, while potentially utilising political opportunities offered by other branches.

One such strategy, which could be termed 'state-splitting', is employed by militant non-state actors to exploit divisions among political elites in an attempt to gain support for political change from rival factions of state office-holders. For instance, in supporting candidates running for office in the congress or senate, non-state actors can challenge the legitimacy of the office of the president or perhaps draw attention to the wider oligarchic power structures of capitalists and landlords. In challenging the legitimacy of the military, such as through drawing public attention to cases of disappearances and human rights abuses, non-state actors can make use of the courts to file writs of *habeas corpus* (Azcuna, 2009).

The success of the people power campaigns in achieving a change of executive government in 1986 and 2001 can in large part be attributed to the success of non-state actors in splitting various branches of the state. By gaining the support of sections of the military and police and by making use of elite allies, such as a leading opposition candidate in the case of Corazon Aquino during the 1986 campaign against President Marcos, or the Vice-President in the case of Gloria Arroyo in the 2001 campaign against President Estrada, non-state actors were able to effect change at the highest level of state power. The more difficult challenge now being faced by the coalition of non-state actors represented by BAYAN is how to articulate this state-splitting strategy to achieve more fundamental changes in the political and economic structures in order to benefit the base communities of the activist organisations (interview 2, 2008). The idea of the transitional council is a potential strategy to build a temporary coalition of elite and community-based actors to effect structural changes. However, this strategy relies on a combination of highly contingent factors involved in gaining support for another people power revolution from base communities, together with support from powerful interests in the church, government, and military. In 2008, for example, BAYAN was able to mobilise substantial popular support for political and economic reforms, but lacked support from military and

church elites (interview 2, 2008).

A less ambitious strategy of selective engagement with the state was followed by the NUSP, which sought to retain access to the state in order to influence policy, while selectively challenging the legitimacy of aspects of the state to push for more far-reaching political change. One of the main areas of activity of the NUSP is in researching position papers on matters of education policy, to coordinate between member student associations and state agencies responsible for education. In addition to these policy recommendations, the NUSP is a regular participant in congress and senate committee meetings, representing youth and students. The NUSP also engages with the National Youth Commission, under the office of the President, which 'often seeks the NUSP's position on various issues, especially regarding legislation for the youth' (interview 6, 2008). In parallel to this strategy of engagement, the NUSP has evolved a progressive orientation based on a radical analysis of political and economic power in the Philippines. This progressive orientation developed originally in the form of a critique of the 'mistakes' of the 1980s NUSP leadership and certain 'erroneous tendencies to heavily rely on parliamentary processes, within the legal framework' (interview 6, 2008). Through a process of 'radicalisation', the NUSP developed a dual strategy of selectively engaging with branches of the state to achieve policy reform, while also forming alliances with other non-state actors in campaigns to challenge the legitimacy of aspects of the state. Such campaigns focused, for instance, on ending government corruption, expelling US bases from the Philippines, and on calls for constitutional change. In such campaigns, the NUSP contrasted challenges to the present legitimacy of state institutions with the potential legitimacy of a reformed state:

> We have to some extent lost faith in our democratic processes and institutions. It will take a long time, but definitely we want the process to succeed, to serve their purposes, in terms of providing social services, meeting the demands of the Philippine people (interview 6, 2008).

As this quote illustrates, the criticisms of the state advanced by opposition groups envisage the shape of a future legitimate political order. Rather than achieving a change of government (*who* is governing), political resistance and everyday political actions are instead directed at achieving a change in the *regime* (defined as *how* and *why* a government governs), which is a strategic goal common to everyday political struggles in both Burma and the Philippines. Efforts to contest the legitimacy of the existing government are therefore interdependent in both cases with political projects to transform the state.

Conclusion

Opposition groups in Burma and the Philippines are engaged in projects aimed at the realisation of radical political change, which aim to transform states lacking consensual legitimacy into democratic states based on popular consent. The meaning that democracy holds in these two societies is determined in the context of relationships between the state and communities within its borders, on the basis of understandings of the consensual legitimacy that is lacking in the current regime and that would form the basis for a future political order. Arguments about the illegitimacy of a present regime thus combine with the forms of consensual power demonstrated in the practices of opposition groups to produce political standards of consensual legitimacy and of democracy.

In the cases of Burma and the Philippines, the state is widely criticised for its failure to protect the people or to provide for their needs in the areas of education and economic development. The lack of economic opportunities, access to education, and personal or community security form the primary motivations for political resistance in both cases, albeit in distinct ways given the differences in the social, economic, and political environments in each country. Opposition groups strive to contrast the present failures of the state with their own efforts to mobilise resistance to oppression, provide for the needs of the people, and engage in reciprocal processes of political communication. The consensual legitimacy gained by opposition groups is used in these cases as leverage to further the political project of transforming the state regime. The blueprints for the state that these groups intend to build if they are successful in taking power are being drawn in the process of struggle, in the interaction between popular motivations for resistance to present regimes, and in the forms of organisation developed by opposition groups as they seek to create an alternative base of consensual power.

Criticisms of the current regimes in Burma and the Philippines are based on judgements of state legitimacy in terms of the needs of the community and the quality of the relationship between the state and people. The appropriate provision of education and economic management is identified in both cases as key needs and determinants of political legitimacy. In Burma, the state is judged actively hostile to the goals of popular education and economic development. In the Philippines, the under-performance of the state in both education and economic development is attributed to structural failings and a dependent relationship with external actors, which undermines the legitimacy of the state.

In addition, the state is judged in terms of the relative openness to participation, versus the degree of political and military repression. In the Philippines, certain limited opportunities for engagement and participation in the political structure of the state coexist

with a high level of military repression of opposition groups. In Burma, a complete lack of opportunities to engage politically with the state is combined with a very high level of generalised military repression and targeting of opposition groups.

This chapter has highlighted how non-state actors are significant players in the construction and contestation of political legitimacy. With regard to the state, community-based organisations play an important role in framing popular judgements and mobilising popular political actions, which may serve to either reinforce or undermine a state's legitimacy. In addition, non-state actors actively build their own political legitimacy in relation to their communities. Where a polity is characterised by a high degree of conflict in which the state is seen as partisan or hostile to social actors, the legitimacy of community-based organisations can be comparable to or greater than that of the state. In conflict situations, community-based organisations gain legitimacy through mobilising resistance to the state, assistance to the community, and through reciprocal relationships of mutual communication.

4

Political Violence and Non-Violence

This chapter argues that a variety of attitudes and approaches towards violence and non-violence exist within civil society. Research in the areas of global civil society and political violence has tended to reinforce a dichotomy between the two in normative and descriptive terms. While civil society groups are assumed to be non-violent and opposed to war, armed groups are sometimes treated as if they have no connection to the networks and concerns of civil society. By contrast, the approach taken in this thesis situates both armed and non-armed groups within networks of relationships extending from local to global contexts.

Applying this relational approach to the study of violence and non-violence within political movements reveals that armed and non-armed groups often have more in common than is sometimes assumed. A range of viewpoints on political violence exists across the groups, with many armed group members supporting peaceful solutions and many members of non-violent organisations defending aspects of the armed struggle. This chapter argues that the existence of differing political positions on violence does not represent a fundamental or unbridgeable division between groups and does not prevent widespread cooperation between groups ranging from those actively engaged in armed struggle to those with a principled commitment to pacifism.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section discusses existing theories of global civil society as essentially 'non-violent', as well as demonstrating the normative assumptions that such theories embody, which are not borne out in practice in many actual cases of social struggles. In addition, the links between contemporary coercive practices in Burma and the Philippines and each country's colonial legacy are also examined, helping to illustrate how earlier patterns of state violence can result in a form of path dependence that is difficult to shift even after a sustained period of post-colonial rule. The four remaining sections in the chapter each draw on these concepts and themes to focus on Burma and the Philippines with respect to the nature of community relations, the dynamics of relations within community-based organisations, and the differences in the nature of relations between these organisations and local communities, the state, and international groups.

The chapter concludes by emphasising the commonalities that are often shared between both violent and non-violent groups in the cases of Burma and the Philippines. These commonalities suggest the need for a rethinking of the analytical category of (global) 'civil society' as an essentially non-violent realm in the study of International Relations.

Theories of Non-Violent Global Civil Society

Theorists of global civil society have tended to associate the concept with a commitment to non-violence. John Keane's (2003, 145) view of global civil society is that 'violence is anathema to its spirit and substance. This follows, by definition, because global civil society is marked by a tendency to non-violence'. While Keane's assertion is broadly representative of the Liberal consensus on the subject, not all theorists share the definition of civil society as a sphere of non-violent voluntary association. Chandhoke (2003, 61) has problematised the assumptions that civil society is non-violent and that it is characterised by horizontal relationships of trust. Taken together, these two assumptions render invisible the political nature of resistance by oppressed groups and fail to recognise the inequalities of power that constitute the oppression in the first place. For marginalised or oppressed groups to take advantage of the rights of civil society, such as the right to organise a social movement or trade union, is in itself often a struggle occasioning violent repression. In such situations, civil society is not experienced as a neutral and peaceful realm of association, but rather as a set of unequal power relations linked to economic class and enforced by state violence (Chandhoke 2003, 207-220). In a similar historical argument which generalises the experiences of developing states from a comparative analysis of the development of civil societies in India and Europe, Mitra (2003) argues that emerging civil societies have always been characterised by political violence. From this perspective, outbreaks of violent resistance are less a result of state failure and more a result of social conflicts focused around a developing state. The existence of violence in a developing civil society should not then be seen as exceptional but rather as a sign of underlying conflicts over political values and status.

Considering the relationship between civil society and violence in a social context requires an understanding of violence as more than the deliberate infliction of physical harm by one person on another. In an influential article, Galtung (1969) has argued for an expanded definition of violence to include a variety of means by which harm may be inflicted. Violence, for Galtung, is a phenomenon that diminishes a person's actual ability to realise their potential wellbeing, whether physical, psychological, or social (Galtung 1969, 169). On the basis of this definition, Galtung distinguishes between personal violence where there is a specific actor who commits a violent act, and structural violence where

there is no one actor to which harm is attributable. The concept of structural violence is similar in some ways to Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence, which operates through the inequalities of power in relationships that constrict the range of interpretations and choices that an actor can make in a given situation. For Bourdieu (1995, 192), symbolic violence involves the legitimation of inequality and exploitation, in a way that masks or euphemises the violence of the relations, in contrast to physical violence which makes the act of oppression visible. Bourdieu applied his concept of symbolic violence to analyse oppressive social relations from economic exploitation to masculine domination (Bourdieu 2001). While the focus in this chapter is on the political use or avoidance of direct violence, the concepts of structural and symbolic violence help to show how violence is imbricated in patterns of everyday social relationships.

In the cases of Burma and the Philippines, many of the social relations that give rise to violent conflict are based in forms of structural and symbolic violence inherited from the colonial state and specific to the post-colonial conditions of these societies. The practices of colonial rule created patterns of direct, structural, and symbolic violence which continue to influence state-society relations in the present day. The forms of direct state violence by which exploitative demands on the population are enforced, and resistance quashed, find their direct antecedents in the colonial period. In Burma, the most brutal forms of forced labour found today were pioneered by the British colonial administration. Likewise, the Tatmadaw practices of forced portering, including the practices of beating and starving porters to death and of using porters as human shields, are a continuation of military practices established by the British army in Burma (Scott 2010). In both Burma and the Philippines, the tactics of counter-insurgency which involve widespread collective punishment of civilians as a means to weaken the resolve of resistance groups are also borrowed directly from colonial regimes. For instance, the Tatmadaw practice of forced relocation, under which thousands of villages in Burma's border areas have been destroyed and their inhabitants forcibly resettled in 'model villages' (interview 16, 2006), is an application of the British policy of 'strategic hamletting' applied on a large scale in Malaya during the 1948 insurgency and later by American forces in Vietnam (Nagl 2001, 129).

More insidiously, the post-colonial state continues to exercise the colonial means of symbolic violence that Fanon (1986, 12-13) identified as the social causes of internalised feelings of inferiority on the part of colonial subjects. The means of symbolic violence are embedded in the social relations of everyday politics and include those forms of systematic deprivation and exploitation that, in the aggregate, correspond to Galtung's category of structural violence. For instance, the systematic under-development of state-provided

education discussed in the previous chapter can be seen as a form of structural violence in that it limits the actual potential wellbeing of the population (Galtung 1969, 169), and as symbolic violence in that inequality in access to education has been utilised since colonial times to create stratified societies in which the majority of the population is isolated from the means of political decision-making. Through symbolic violence, exploited and oppressed people come to misrecognise their situation as a natural order (Bourdieu 1995) rather than as a contingent and changeable political arrangement. This symbolic violence must be overcome for a successful resistance to be launched against state repression. As Fanon (2005) argued, the direct violence of revolutionary resistance can play a positive and cathartic role in overcoming oppressive symbolic violence.

In contrast to this view, theorists and proponents of global civil society have tended to see violence in all its forms as a threat, or as part of the 'dark side' of civil society (Albrow and Anheir 2007, 1). Many scholars of global civil society have promoted it as a field of practice which can reinforce the governance roles of international organisations and powerful states in the pursuit of international law and peace. Global civil society in turn is seen as mobilising against war, with large scale anti-war protest showing 'both the robust reality of global civil society, and its current weakness as a challenge to geopolitical prerogatives' (Falk 2005, 76). Others have gone further, claiming that due to the expansion of global civil society and of international law, 'war, meaning violence between socially organised groups, normally states, has become morally unjustifiable' (Ezzat and Kaldor 2007, 19). Kaldor has argued elsewhere that Liberals since Kant have 'envisaged the construction of a liberal international order linked to the rise of domestic civil society, in which force was increasingly limited to policing actions' (2003a, 36). Kaldor (2003b, 583) identifies with this Kantian tradition and emphasises that the conditions of liberal global governance in politico-legal terms are co-constitutive with those of global civil society: 'civil society needs governance, a framework of rules and institutions for civil society to function' (Kaldor 2003a, 109), in particular, the 'extension and application of international humanitarian law (the 'laws of war') and human rights law'. Noting that laws need enforcement, Kaldor (2003a, 128) advocates 'humanitarian intervention' in the form of military force which aims 'not to defeat an enemy but to protect civilians and stabilise war situations so that non-extremist tolerant politics has space to develop'. Global civil society is thus seen as a civilising influence on state violence, not only in preventing war, but also in certain circumstances in legitimising state warfare for humanitarian ends.

The pragmatic willingness of theorists of global civil society to consider state violence as potentially legitimate is not generally extended to non-state actors. In what Keane calls

'uncivil war' the traditional rules of state warfare do not apply as the anarchy of non-state violence is unleashed. While traditional civil wars involve rival claimants to state power, uncivil war involves the breakdown of state power, or in currently fashionable terms, state failure. The removal of the state as the stable centre of conflict disturbs the familiar moral order, leading Keane (2004, 155-7) to warn that uncivil war operates 'according to no rules except that of destructiveness' as 'sober restrictions covering the ground rules of war are swept aside'. However, Keane does not provide any substantive evidence of state warfare being conducted according to sober rules or a care to avoid destruction. While uncivil wars are discussed in terms of periods of communal violence such as in Rwanda and Bosnia, the term is broad enough to cover almost any non-state violence. The only form of resistance that is explicitly exempted from this definition of 'uncivil society' is the non-violent civil disobedience of Thoreau and Gandhi (Keane 2004, 109, n1). Keane's concept of uncivil war correlates to what Kaldor calls 'network war', a supposedly new form of conflict involving 'armed networks of non-state and state actors' (Kaldor 2003a, 119). The analysis of network war depicts non-state armed groups in pejorative terms as terrorists, fanatics, criminals, mercenaries, and followers of charismatic leaders and warlords. Like Keane, Kaldor makes use of the idea of 'failed states' to explain how these groups exploit conditions in which 'the monopoly of legitimate organised violence is being eroded' (2003, 120). In contrast to the potential for state violence to reinforce international norms, non-state violence is seen as destabilising and necessarily contrary to the aims of global civil society. This view has not been directly challenged by theorists of political violence, who have tended to be engaged in debates about conflict and insurgency rather than the character of global civil society. However, this chapter argues that there is more empirical overlap between the subfields of political violence and global civil society than has generally been assumed.

Relations in the Community

Burma

The impact of ongoing armed conflicts and military repression in Burma looms large over the communities inside Burma with which opposition groups maintain relationships. The severe problems and collective suffering experienced by communities in Burma can be seen as both causes and consequences of armed conflicts. Participants across the different groups experience a lack of education and economic opportunities in their communities, as well as ethnic and gender discrimination.

The discrimination faced by non-Burman ethnic communities is a significant factor in

framing the identification of activists with their communities and in the forms of collective action they choose to engage in. The experience of one young engineering graduate from Kachin state applying for work in a Burman-dominated state industry shows how ethnic and religious discrimination are closely linked:

> They didn't give me permanent work. They want me only as a helper worker. Because I am a Christian and a Kachin, so they don't want to give the opportunity to Christian people (interview 9, 2006).

For this participant, ethnic and religious discrimination, combined with a lack of economic opportunity, motivated her decisions to become a migrant worker in Thailand and to participate in non-armed opposition work with the AKSYU. For others in similar situations, the combination of religious and ethnic discrimination with economic hardship in their communities motivate them to join armed groups. A description by the KNU's foreign secretary of his personal reasons for joining the Karen insurgency in the late 1970s shows the interrelationship of discrimination and insurgency:

> I studied in Rangoon, and when I finished my school, the first thing I face is the discrimination. As a Karen ethnic group. And then there is the Karen insurgency at the border area, and also at that time it's in Pego Yama, in the centre of Burma, so we are not getting the opportunity even in education or even in job. This is the discrimination that I faced, so I think that if I join the resistance group here I can work more than what I have to do in Burma (interview 21, 2006).

This statement, which echoes the experiences of many members of armed groups, shows that ethnic discrimination can be both a cause and a consequence of armed hostilities. The statement also illustrates, together with the previous quote, how important discrimination can be in framing ethnic identity-formation. In both statements, the description of discrimination is accompanied by a strong statement of identity, such as 'I am a Christian and a Kachin', and 'As a Karen ethnic group'. The significance of these identity statements is emphasised by their context in the personal narratives, where participants are describing their motivations for joining opposition groups. As a framing process for identities, ethnic discrimination fulfils both the collaborative and conflictual functions suggested by Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994). While discrimination is in the first case an antagonistic relation with an oppressive other, the personal and collective responses to discrimination play a collaborative role in strengthening ties of ethnic identity. The common experience of discrimination therefore provides a frame for both the articulation of shared ethnic identity and the mobilisation of resistance. The framing of collective identity and resistance in terms of discrimination functions in a similar way for both armed and non-armed resistance.

Discrimination and abuse against women is also linked to conflict and shows a similar pattern of motivating resistance as well as solidarity. Women in conflict zones face abuses including rape by members of the military (interview 13, 22 and 32, 2006). The lack of economic and social power that some women experience is also demonstrated by the prevalence of human trafficking and forced prostitution in militarised areas such as Kachin state (interview 22, 2006). Women also lack control over marriage and are expected to support their men during armed conflict while also looking after children and family members (interviews 13 and 22, 2006). Discrimination against women, both within opposition movements and in the community, has led women to form independent organisations to promote equal participation and empowerment of women. While women are represented in both armed and non-armed groups and have a range of views on political violence, the formation of autonomous women's organisations in the 1990s represented a move away from armed struggle towards non-violent forms of resistance for the women involved. Each of the women's organisations in the study has a policy commitment to non-violence, and many have taken leading roles in promoting non-violent political resistance and conflict resolution in their communities (interviews 12 and 25, 2006).

Communities experiencing a military onslaught by the state face seemingly impossible choices between resistance and surrender. Participants discussed problems with both armed resistance and the ceasefire agreements that many armed ethnic groups have signed with the central government. Armed resistance was seen as leading to further loss of life, abuse of human rights, and damage to property. Fighting was seen to harm innocent people and cause suffering (interviews 13, 23, 2006). Resistance was also seen as unlikely to succeed, given the superior firepower of the military regime (interview 23, 2006). The difficulties of armed struggle are furthered by a lack of weapons and international support. Global trends, such as the end of the cold war and the declaration of a 'war on terrorism', were cited as reasons for this (interviews 2, 3 and 6, 2006). The difficulties of continued resistance have led many armed groups to sign ceasefire agreements with the regime. As one participant from Kachin state put it:

> Most of the armed groups, why they start to get a ceasefire with the SPDC is that any armed organisation faces a lot of problems. Most of your local people shot dead by SPDC. For example, here is maybe one brigade settled in the region, but in the region most are local people living. So the SPDC came to fight them several times, but the local people could not resist them anymore. They have lack of food, lack of health … So finally the ethnic armed groups know their local people face a problem and they start to get ceasefire with the SPDC (interview 17, 2006).

Several participants criticised existing ceasefire agreements as 'not genuine' or a 'false peace' (interviews 25 and 34, 2006). Reasons given were that ethnic groups had been forced to accept the ceasefire, that the ceasefire did not address the underlying causes of conflict or political reforms, and that expansion of military bases and abuses of the people had continued. These concerns were expressed by both armed and non-armed groups (interviews 2, 9, 25, 30 and 34, 2006).

Participants discussed the relationships their groups had formed with both their own communities and other organisations. Participants from both armed and non-armed groups expressed the opinion that armed groups were supported by their communities. A spokesperson for the non-armed KWO said of the armed KNLA that:

> for the people who are inside [Burma], they feel like they still have people to protect them and it would be worse if they are not present there. For example if the military comes to attack them and if there is a guerrilla group try to intervene, try to stop, even though they cannot protect them completely, they still feel like they try to defend them, so they have time to run away (interview 25, 2006).

Kachin participants, all from non-armed groups, said that the KIO had enjoyed broad community support since its formation, with one saying 'the KIO is the heart of our Kachin people' (interview 22, 2006). Although the KIO had signed a ceasefire with the regime, it was still seen as providing a buffer against SPDC troops. The spokesperson for the PSLF said that from the time of its formation, until signing a ceasefire with the regime, the PSLO had received '100 percent support from the Palaung people to make activity for the Palaung revolution movement and even to join with Shan, join with Kachin, join with Communists sometimes, we fight our common enemy, what we now call SPDC.' (interview 34, 2006). This support is seen as arising from community organising, creating a recognition that the community and the organisation were mutually reliant on each other. For example, the KNU is seen as the legitimate representatives of the Karen people by both armed and non-armed groups. Their spokesperson said that the organisation relied almost entirely on community support: 'through the whole struggle we didn't get any support from outside, we only got support from our own Karen people from inside.' (interview 21, 2006). Ethnic armed groups typically took on state functions in areas under their control, providing for the health, education, and welfare of their people. A spokesperson for the New Mon State Party said that the armed group 'is acting as a political party in Mon state. But while they are doing that, they also have a responsibility for the people in Mon state, for their education, for their health, for their development.' (interview 33, 2006)

The Philippines

The organisations from the Philippines that were included in this study were all part of the legal and non-violent opposition movements and had no formal links to groups engaged in armed resistance. One organisation, the Cordillera People's Alliance, includes groups that were previously engaged in armed resistance to the Marcos regime in the 1980s. One participant, from the KMU union federation, also discussed aspects of the relationship between the communist New People's Army and their base communities. In both cases, the relationships between the armed groups and local communities were seen as important. Where an armed group could be seen to be supporting and protecting the local people, they would be likely to gain support.

   Two major areas of armed resistance were described in the Cordillera region during the 1980s. Both related to major development projects promoted by the Marcos regime, the Chico dam project and the Cellophil resources corporation. In both cases, the Cordillera peoples in the areas to be affected by the projects mobilised in opposition. The Chico dam project was initiated by the Marcos regime with support from the World Bank. If the project had gone ahead, the CPA claims that approximately 100,000 families would have been immediately displaced (interview 3, 2008). The dam project was resisted by members of the Bontok and Kalinga people, who disrupted surveying and construction work with sabotage and armed attacks. The other major area of struggle in the region during the period was the opposition to logging by the Cellophil corporation. Resistance was led by Tinguan people in Abra province, together with Kantanay people in Mountain Province and Kalinga in the North-Eastern area of Illocosur (interview 3, 2008). The armed resistance to both of the large scale development projects was described by the present secretary of the CPA as 'waging armed struggle to defend our ancestral territories' (interview 3, 2008). The legitimacy of these instances of armed resistance is defended by the CPA in terms of the values of its member communities:

> these communities are also tribal communities, they are warrior societies, and to them to defend life, to defend our territory, it is legitimate to us to wage an armed struggle. Because that's the decision of the people. Because their position is to defend, they are not the ones attacking, but to defend what is rightfully theirs, for the present generation and for the future (interview 3, 2008).

Although the CPA now has a policy of non-violence as part of the legal opposition movement, the memory of militant armed struggle against state repression is still a celebrated part of the organisation's history. CPA activists remember the struggles against state repression in the form of songs and popular theatre that are a central feature of CPA gatherings (interview 3, 2008).

Members of other organisations in the legal opposition movements also expressed private support for the armed struggle of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The general secretary of the KMU union federation expressed his personal opinion that the NPA were 'protecting the interests of the oppressed' against the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who were 'defending the interests of the bourgeois and the foreign forces' (interview 5, 2008). This claim, that the CPP-NPA is on the side of the people, was not only based on the manifesto goals of the party but also on their methods of organising. The NPA was seen as a volunteer force whose continued existence was dependent on the support they received from their base communities. As the KMU general secretary put it, whereas government forces use money collected from the people to suppress the people, the NPA are a 'self-reliant movement of people fighting on their own terms' (interview 5, 2008). Support from local communities was seen as both necessary to the survival of the NPA and as a mark of the legitimacy of the armed group.

Relations in the Organisation

Burma

Some participants expressed an explicit need for their groups to hold arms in the current situation. The reasons given were to continue to fight for the aims and objectives of the group, to be able to continue political work and maintain access to information from inside the country, and to protect or defend people in border areas. (interviews 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 16, 28 and 34, 2006). Armed organisations are able to access areas which would be unsafe without armed protection. This has allowed them to continue other non-violent activities, including collecting information, political organising, and training. As the ABSDF spokesperson explained: 'Sometimes in the jungle, we did the training, some of the human rights training, community organising training, but we need to hold the arms for their security.' (interview 2, 2006)

Perhaps more surprising, however, were the many expressions of support and preference for a range of non-violent forms of action from members of armed groups in the study. These included expression of the need for more international awareness and pressure on the regime, the need for a grassroots people's movement inside Burma, and the need for a political solution to the conflict, leading to reforms. Spokespeople for armed groups wanted more international awareness of the situation and suffering of people in Burma to counter the 'propaganda' of the SPDC regime. A spokesperson for the New Mon State Party, which includes an armed wing, expressed appreciation for academic

researchers who had worked in the area and brought the existence and struggles of the Mon people to the world's attention. Participants from armed groups also emphasised their need for international support. One spokesperson stated that raising international awareness and support for political change in Burma was the most important goal of his organisation and the primary purpose of their cross-border presence in Thailand. Another emphasised the need for humanitarian assistance to people in conflict areas, arguing that with more food, medical care and education, people would have more energy and ability to engage in non-violent forms of political action. One participant from an armed group, when asked what he would like to see change in Burma, said that he did not want there to be a lot of armed organisations and wanted the people to be able to live in peace.

Several participants from both armed and non-armed groups expressed a belief that armed struggle could not solve their problems. For some participants from non-armed groups this was expressed as a commitment to 'peaceful ways to get change' and a hope that negotiation to end the conflicts would be possible (interview 25, 2006). Others, from armed groups, saw the armed struggle as a legitimate last resort, but never as a full solution. This attitude was expressed in similar terms to those from non-armed groups as statements expressing a need for a combination of tactics and for a political solution to the conflicts (interviews 3, 20 and 21, 2006). For some, however, the unpopularity of the armed struggle was something they had to reluctantly accept. These participants felt that a commitment to the armed struggle was the best contribution they could make to political change in Burma and felt frustrated that they were unable to take effective action (interview 7, 2006). Participants from groups engaged in armed struggle expressed difficulty in finding other ways of pursuing their political objectives, given the lack of international support for the non-violent activities of their organisations, such as education and training (interview 3, 2006).

The role of armed struggle in the opposition movement is a controversial issue and a matter of active debate for groups in the study. Disagreement over the relative importance of armed and political resistance caused a split within the ABSDF, with the 'political' group splitting to form the Network for Development and Democracy (NDD). However, the two groups continue to cooperate and cohabit, with many members of the two groups sharing one section of a refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border (interview 2, 2006).

Each armed group in Burma faces the dilemma over whether to accept a ceasefire agreement with the military regime. When the PSLO accepted a ceasefire, the PSLF split to continue armed resistance (interview 34). In small focus group interviews with members of the Burmese Women's Union and the Kachin Women's Association Thailand, the question

of violent versus non-violent action was the issue that generated the most contentious discussion and disagreement in both interviews (interviews 13 and 23, 2006). The BWU, which has a policy commitment to non-violence, was originally formed to push for gender equality inside the student guerrilla movement and includes members with a range of views and experiences of armed struggle, including current members of the ABSDF. As one of the group's leaders explained, 'we can't say that everyone accepts non-violence or armed group support. For example, we all based on the ABSDF members, then we believed that gender equality we needed to do, there was a bad situation that we needed to change. That is why our policy is on gender equality and mostly by peaceful non-violent action, but politically we have different views.' (interview 13, 2006). Such discussions show that the question of armed versus non-violent action is actively debated among the Burmese opposition groups. While many groups maintain a policy of non-violence for a range of principled and strategic reasons, no sharp lines can be drawn between these groups and others who have taken up arms.

The Philippines

Leaders of mass organisations in the Philippines are eager to emphasise their status as part of the legal opposition movement. In asserting their legal status, the organisations reject the attempts of state forces to equate them with the illegal opposition, principally the CPP-NPA. In claiming legal status, movement leaders distance themselves from the armed opposition while recognising its existence and expressing an acceptance of different forms of struggle. The context of such claims makes it clear that the legitimacy of legal status is being claimed in opposition to state repression and not in opposition to armed struggle. For example, the secretary-general of BAYAN reports:

> the recent experience of political repression and human rights violations have also had impacts on regional formations of BAYAN. There are some regional formations that operate on a semi-legal mode, meaning that they don't have fixed or open offices, they have to be mobile most of the time, so a lot of restrictions on their mode. But we are trying to overcome these and assert the legal democratic mass-movement (interview 2, 2008).

Here the legitimacy of BAYAN as a leading force in the legal movement is contrasted to the illegitimacy of state repression. The experiences of BAYAN activists suffering from state repression are echoed by those of student activists affiliated to the NUSP. As the NUSP President explains:

> We are often subject to red-baiting, being called a front of the Communist Party of the Philippines. We continue to condemn such apparent harassment by state

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authorities. There is an antagonistic relationship to state authorities. At the same time, we continue to assert the legal basis of our organisation and as I said before we are the premier authority on student issues (interview 6, 2008).

Here, the NUSP president makes a claim to legality and legitimacy, while rejecting any association with the illegal CPP. He also makes it clear however, that the 'antagonistic relationship' is not with the CPP but with the state.

In the above quote from the BAYAN secretary-general, state repression is identified as a factor in forcing movement groups to operate in a secretive 'semi-legal' mode. Legality and illegality are therefore seen as modes of operation and as responses to state repression and not necessarily as markers of legitimacy. When legality is mobilised as a marker of legitimacy, it is in order to deny the legitimacy of state repression and not to deny the legitimacy of illegal action. A similar pattern can be seen in the way the secretary-general of the CPA introduces his summary of past political action in the Cordillera as 'those successful struggles, which used various forms, from legal, meta-legal, even extra-legal and armed means' (interview 3, 2008). Here legality becomes a marker identifying different modes of action, each of which may be considered as legitimate in their own context. Indeed, the CPA is seen as inheriting the legacy of the combined successes of both legal and illegal modes of collective agency, involving both armed and non-armed action.

Relations with Local Groups

Burma

Cooperation between armed and non-armed groups is a widespread and normal feature of the Burmese opposition movement. Participants emphasised that different groups could work together towards the same ends by different means and that this could include both non-violent and armed actions. When discussing what forms of action were needed, participants from both armed and non-armed groups expressed support for a combination of tactics, including political mobilisation inside Burma, armed struggle, and international pressure on the regime. A spokesperson for the BWU said that armed and non-armed groups worked together on various campaigns and joint action committees, including seminars for youth dialogue and on issues of democracy, national reconciliation and federal union. 'Our beliefs are the same, we have a common goal, although we are using different strategies. So we are working together all the time.' (interview 12, 2006). Asked whether she thought that outside organisations would understand the need to work with armed groups, she said that this should not be confusing to observers who understood the complexity of the situation as well as the common goals of the groups.

Even groups with a principled commitment to non-violence were not in favour of disarming the non-state armed groups. A spokesperson for the KWO thought that working towards a people's movement inside Burma was the most effective strategy for change, but recognised that armed opposition groups were also necessary in the current situation to help protect the people:

> I think to disarm them is not, I mean it is very difficult. Because they are standing where they are to protect their people, not that they love fighting or for themselves. They think that this is the way to protect the people. So I think that would be difficult (interview 25, 2006).

Participants from armed groups reported that their organisations had formed alliances and worked cooperatively with each other, as well as with non-armed groups. The ethnic armed groups had initially formed the National Democratic Front in 1976 to coordinate their armed struggles for self-determination. In 1988, an expanded alliance was formed to incorporate the newly formed ABSDF, as well as other groups including the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma, under the name Democratic Alliance of Burma. In 1992 these organisations came together with the National League for Democracy (Liberated Area) to form the National Council of the Union of Burma (interviews 10, 15 and 21; NCUB 2007). Ethnic armed groups tended to have close working relationships with the non-armed women's and youth groups from the same communities. Similarly, the Burmese Women's Union was formed by female members of the ABSDF and, although the women's group was committed to non-violence, the two organisations maintained some overlapping membership (interview 13, 2006).

Participants from the ABSDF considered the group to be part of civil society in Burma, understood as 'based on civilians, the people, and the public' (interview 7, 2006) and the self-organisation of the community. Examples given of civil society activity in Burma were village committees to organise social events, or volunteering time at Buddhist temples. ABSDF members considered their group to be part of civil society by virtue of their social service activities for health and education, as well as by the support they received from the community (interviews 2, 4 and 7, 2006).

Differences of opinion over the question of ceasefire agreements had caused division amongst the opposition groups. One participant from the AKSYU reported arguments between supporters and opponents of the ceasefires as a divisive issue at youth networking meetings (interview 9, 2006). The spokesperson for the ABSDF expressed the criticisms that some ceasefire groups were more interested in 'getting rich' and maintaining their own local authority than in working toward democracy or cooperating with other opposition

groups (interview 2, 2006). Disagreement with the decision of the Palaung State Liberation Organisation to sign a ceasefire was the founding moment for the PSLF to break away from their 'mother organisation' and to 'continue to fight for our aim and objectives as we have laid down' (interview 6, 2006). However, the ceasefire in Palaung state has made it difficult for the PSLF to continue the armed struggle, as they were cut off from communications, arms, and recruits. Similarly, the ABSDF has found their operations in Kachin and Karen states restricted following the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) ceasefire and the 2004 'gentlemen's agreement' between the regime and the KNU (interview 2, 2006). Mon organisations have had difficulties with a ceasefire agreement that forbids political activity or contact with outside organisations. Members of the organisations active inside Mon state said the ceasefire had made it harder for them to express their opinions freely or organise protests. It was difficult to deal with other organisations and they had to be very careful when arranging meetings or contact (interviews 31, 32 and 33).

Philippines

The KMU general secretary supported the armed struggle of the NPA because 'it puts the people's organisation on a par with government suppression, because they can rely on this group whenever there is government suppression, they can always call on support from these people to protect them.' For these reasons, the general secretary felt that his opinions were shared by many activists within the legal non-violent opposition movements: 'people's organisations know very well that this armed group is for them and this military and police are tools of their enemy' (interview 5, 2008)

It is not possible for most activists in the legal opposition movements to express such open support for the armed struggle of the NPA. Government repression of legal activists is often based on allegations that these activists are communists or that they support the rebels. Legal organisations are therefore careful to maintain public neutrality on the conflict between the NPA and the AFP. Statements of support for the outlawed CPP are somewhat more common however, including public campaigns in support of the exiled founder of the CPP, Prof. Jose Maria Sison (BAYAN 2010b). Sison remains a key figure whose role as a public intellectual and political leader extends beyond the CPP. In his role as chair of the International League of Peoples' Struggle, Sison is able to promote links between the legal and the armed wings of the opposition movements in the Philippines. These connections are discussed in more detail below in the section on relations with international groups.

The CPP maintains that waging armed struggle against the state is consistent with

supporting efforts by other opposition movements to engage with parliamentary and legal processes. When military sources suggested in the media that the CPP leadership was split between those supporting the armed struggle and those advocating a legal and parliamentary approach, the CPP responded that there was no contradiction in supporting both. While the CPP maintains that 'it is revolutionary armed struggle that will guarantee the eventual victory of the revolutionary movement', it also recognises the potential for progress to be made through legal political channels:

> The entire revolutionary movement welcomes and persistently works for the attainment of substantive or even tactical gains for the revolution and the Filipino people through peace talks, parliamentary struggle and all other forms of legal struggle, without at any moment abandoning or relegating to secondary status the revolutionary armed struggle (CPP, 2010).

While this statement should of course be read as propaganda, the choice of response is nonetheless interesting. Rather than denying outright the AFP's claim that support exists within the CPP for legal parliamentary approaches, the party emphatically affirmed the compatibility of legal and armed struggle. Although it is more difficult for members of the legal organisations to express such opinions without facing persecution, it seems reasonable to agree with the general secretary of the KMU that such views are likely to be widespread within the legal movements.

Relations with the State

Burma

Problems which were explicitly identified by participants as causes of armed conflict included government denial of ethnic rights and refusal to listen to minority voices, government attacks on community leaders, the government reneging on agreements, ineffectiveness of peaceful protest, and desperation caused by poverty and a lack of alternative forms of resistance. Many of these problems, like the conflicts they are linked to, go back fifty years or more to the political struggles of post-independence Burma. Specific grievances which sparked conflict included the 1948 disbanding of ethnic-based military units such as the Karen Rifles, the lack of promised Karen and Mon States in the independent Union of Burma, and the 1961 government suppression of the traditional Palaung royalty (interviews 21, 33 and 34, 2006). The 1988 student conflict with the regime which preceded the formation of the ABSDF had been sparked by a heavy police response to a fight in a Rangoon tea shop. When students protested, demanding an official investigation, the state responded with further violence, and protests escalated. When the

military intervened and crushed the protests, many students fled to the jungle and took up arms. Participants described an ongoing political crisis in the 1980s as the BSPP regime maintained a one-party system and a socialist ideology that was in conflict with government practice, while enforcing order with 'draconian censorship laws' and arrests of people who criticised the government (interviews 2 and 8, 2006). Members of each armed group cited a lack of consultation or unwillingness to listen on the part of successive regimes as causes of the ongoing and unresolved armed conflicts.

The impossibility of working with the regime was also identified as a problem by participants from non-armed groups. Members of women's groups felt that they were hated by the regime for exposing the abuses of women by members of the military and for their criticisms of the regime (interview 12, 2006). Members of the groups had been blacklisted and forced to flee the country. It was felt that any contact with the regime was dangerous (interview 22, 2006). Participants from groups that had produced reports on social problems in Burma did not believe that these would be heeded by the regime or have an effect on policy (interview 9, 2006).

Participants reported widespread anger with the regime. In the cities, these 'bad feelings' toward the government were caused by decisions such as the cancellation of certain banknotes in 1987, instantly impoverishing many people, as well as by political repression and violence toward protesters (interview 2, 2006). In rural areas, resentment of local BSPP authorities was exacerbated by poverty, economic restrictions, and widespread corruption (interview 1, 2006). One participant from Karen state said that this situation made the people 'desperate to fight for their freedom in terms of political freedom, economic freedom.' (interview 8, 2008). Another participant, from Kachin state, said that most people learnt to both fear and oppose government and local authority officers from the first time they encountered them: 'Because always the SPDC threaten with the gun to the civilian or local people, so they are afraid of that weapon, but in their mind they know what they should do.' (interview 9, 2006).

A range of abuses by the military regime was catalogued by participants across all groups in the sample. Recent army offensives and expansion of military bases in the border area, especially in Karen state, had caused villagers to be confined to their homes or forcibly relocated and cut off from their fields and food supplies. Others had been forced to flee their homes, hiding in the jungle or crossing the border into Thailand (interviews 16 and 25, 2006). Various participants from Karen and Kachin states reported an increase in forced labour, conscription, and extortion by military authorities to fund the expanded military presence in those areas (interviews 9, 16, 22 and 25, 2006). Groups from Mon state

reported that despite a ceasefire with the military regime, people continued to suffer forced labour and relocation and other human rights violations, including rape and killings (interviews 32, 33 and 34, 2006). Participants from all women's groups reported widespread rape by soldiers, which they felt was sanctioned by military authorities and used as a weapon of war against their communities. The regime was also blamed for involvement in drug trafficking and creating the conditions for widespread drug addiction, especially among young people in Kachin state (interview 9, 2006). These abuses and the resentment and resistance they engender can seen as both cause and consequence of armed conflict.

The Philippines

Legal opposition movements in the Philippines face an ambiguous relationship with the state. On the one hand, the formally democratic parliamentary system provides real opportunities to engage with authorities. On the other hand, political repression is widespread as units of the AFP extend their counter-insurgency campaign against the CPP-NPA to target civil society organisations seen as sympathetic. In addition, each of the opposition activists interviewed linked wider problems in Philippines society and economy to the structure of the state. The state is seen as dominated by elite economic interests, primarily landowning families, who are in turn subservient to foreign capital. As the secretary-general of BAYAN put it:

> The Philippine reality has been shaped by more than a hundred years of colonial and neo-colonial rule, backward agricultural feudal, semi-feudal conditions and power concentrated in the hands of the few, the economic and political elite (interview 2, 2006).

In this context, opposition activists describe the collective motivations of their organisations to seek a renewal of Philippines culture along 'nationalist, pro-people and scientific' lines (interview 1, 2008). Because the structural problems with the state are seen as rooted in the social and economic systems of the country, the form that resistance takes is just as important as any immediate strategic objective:

> our goal is not just the removal of one administration or the changing of one regime, it is the long term goal of changing society and the social system. But for the current regime, the immediate objective is to make it accountable for all its crimes and seek its removal through peaceful means and mass protest actions (interview 2, 2008).

Opposition activists emphasise the importance of non-violent activism and cultural work in creating the necessary conditions for political and social change. While mobilising in opposition to the state on particular issues such as corruption, opposition movements also

try to link these issues to broader problems with the structure of the state and the need for fundamental change.

Where political space has been unavailable for the peaceful expression of opposition to government policies, political movements have taken up armed resistance against the state. For example, the resistance of the Cordillera peoples to state development projects in the 1970s and 1980s followed a typical pattern of escalation. When protest letters, petitions, and meetings with government officials had no effect, the affected communities turned to more direct and militant forms of protest. In one peaceful direct action against the Chico dam, an entire community dismantled a surveying camp and marched en masse to the provincial capital to return the engineering equipment to the governor. The military responded to such actions with repression, arresting protest leaders and even whole communities and holding them for long periods (Hyndman 1991, 172). As the Cordillera region became increasingly militarised under martial law, some of those resisting large-scale development projects joined the New People's Army or took independent armed action against the state forces (interview 3, 2008). With the relative increase in political space following the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship, opposition groups such as the CPA have returned to legal and non-violent forms of struggle.

Relations with International Groups

Burma

Participants from armed organisations expressed a desire for international understanding of their need to hold arms for self-defence and in pursuit of their goals. A common sentiment was expressed by a member of the ABSDF: 'when they come after us with guns, we need the guns to defend ourselves. I think if people come and talk to us and see the situation, they will understand that'. Others expressed frustration at the lack of international support or funds for groups that hold arms. Members of armed groups in the study felt that they deserved the support of global civil society because they were fighting for democratic change and for the benefit of the people. As one ABSDF member put it, 'the international groups like NGOs, civil society, if they really want to change Burma they need to support armed struggle effectively'. These needs for weapons and support for armed struggle were, unsurprisingly, expressed by members of the armed groups rather than those from non-armed groups.

A lack of international awareness, understanding, or support was expressed by several participants from both armed and non-armed groups. However, members of armed groups reported a more widespread lack of support than members of non-armed groups.

Participants who felt their groups lacked international support attributed this to various factors, including isolation, lack of information sharing, lack of contacts, and international interest in national politics rather than minority interests. These concerns were expressed by members of the armed groups as well as members of the smaller, less well known non-armed groups (KWAT, AKSYU).

In addition, members of armed groups felt that they lacked international support and understanding due to a widespread opposition to armed struggle and political violence. However, as Clifford Bob (2005, 4) has pointed out, international support for armed resistance movements is uneven and depends both on strategic factors and the agency of armed groups themselves in forging international alliances. Armed groups from Burma have struggled for many years to access any international assistance, including humanitarian assistance or support for their education and health departments. When the ABSDF was in the early stages of organising students fleeing state repression in the late 1980s, emergency food supplied by international NGOs was restricted to rice and fish paste, and was only supplied to non-combatants. The group survived by trading rice for other food supplies and sharing half-rations between armed and non-armed members. Later, the group managed to access some aid funding to assist in setting up education and health programs for refugees on the border. But in 2001, this funding too was cut, with USAID withdrawing support. Group members interviewed felt that this indicated a changing international attitude against armed groups, which was confirmed by the declaration of the 'war on terror'. A spokesperson for the KNU also linked a lack of recognition from international groups and governments to a perception that armed groups were linked to terrorism. This was due, in his opinion, to a lack of understanding of the causes of conflict:

> when you talk about arms, some of the westerners think that you're from the other side, like you're from the terrorist group. But we have to explain to them why we hold arms. From the very beginning, people don't want to hold arms. All the ethnic groups from the early days, they would like to solve the problem by democratic ways. But when you are forced to come to this solution, I think all the ethnic groups started with this struggle. To get the support, we have to explain to them the atrocity that our people facing in our homeland, the discrimination that our people facing (interview 2).

This participant reported that similar attitudes had initially been encountered from students and other political refugees fleeing repression in the cities. He felt that some people were wary of working with armed groups because of government propaganda that ethnic armed groups were terrorists. Only when they had stayed for a while at the border and seen that the armed groups were there 'only to defend their community, defend themselves' did they understand and support the need to hold arms. This explanation links the lack of

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international support for armed groups to a lack of awareness and understanding of the situation for their communities, the causes of the conflicts, and the motivations for armed resistance.

While international support for armed resistance has declined, there has been some increase in international efforts to promote norms of non-violent resistance. For instance, the Albert Einstein Institution (AEI) established by Gene Sharp, a leading proponent of strategic non-violence, has taken an increasingly active interest in Burma (Albert Einstein Institution 2000, 2004). Sharp's book *From Dictatorship to Democracy* was written for use by Burmese opposition activists and was first published in serial form in Burmese and English by the Burmese opposition journal Kyit Paing (New Era) in 1993 (Sharp 2003, 87-90). In 2009, the National Endowment for Democracy provided USD300,000 through the International Republican Institute for training programmes and other activities run by AEI to 'strengthen the capacity of the democratic opposition and civil society groups to engage in non-violent political action inside Burma' (National Endowment for Democracy 2010). The effects of these training activities in promoting international norms and reframing local practices are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Members of both armed and non-armed groups discussed international awareness-raising and networking as potential sources of financial and human resources for their groups. For instance, a soldier from the Karen National Liberation Army said that he hoped that people who heard about the situation in Karen state through this study would be able to come to the area and help in some way. One women's group member said: 'when other people know about what is happening inside…we get donations or people want to come and help'. Members of women's, youth, and student organisations also discussed the strength of international networks that allowed them to participate in international campaigns and learn from other organisations. Participants from both armed and non-armed groups expressed a need for peace in their country.

All members of armed groups in the sample said that more international pressure on the regime in Burma was needed. Pressure was seen as needed to persuade the regime to enter into dialogue, to respect human rights, and to give up power. Support was consistently expressed for 'tripartite dialogue' between armed ethnic groups, the National League for Democracy (NLD), and the SPDC regime. Participants supported international pressure towards these goals in the form of action by the United Nations Security Council, diplomatic pressure by states, and sanctions on Burmese military and business interests. No support was expressed for outside military intervention, with one participant saying supporting this would be 'quite crazy'.

The Philippines

Opposition activists from the Philippines, including members of both unarmed legal movements and armed illegal movements, have been able to use international fora to interact in ways which would not be possible domestically. The Philippines mass movements affiliated with BAYAN, which include all of the groups participating in this study, with the exception of the NUSP, are also affiliated with the International League for Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) (International League of Peoples' Struggle 2004a). The ILPS is an organisation which exists to 'promote, support and develop the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles of the peoples of the world' (International League of Peoples' Struggle 2004b). Links between the ILPS and the Philippines are especially strong, as the ILPS is chaired by Prof. Jose Maria Sison, exiled leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and chief political advisor to the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), who now lives in the Netherlands. Members of the Philippines organisations attend international meetings of the ILPS and receive delegations from ILPS affiliates in other countries (interviews 2, 3 and 5, 2008). ILPS meetings provide an opportunity for members of the legal movements in the Philippines to liaise with Prof. Sison and the NDFP in an open forum which could not occur in the Philippines, where the NDFP's member organisations are banned.

Opposition groups from the Philippines have also used international fora and relationships with international groups to campaign against political violence targeted against them by the state. The BAYAN organisations coordinate campaigns against killings, abductions, and disappearances of activists by state forces (interview 2, 2008; IBON 2007). The secretary-general of BAYAN credited international support for the 'Stop the Killings' campaign with putting sufficient pressure on the Arroyo government to achieve a reduction in the politically targeted violence. For instance, by working through international trade union contacts, the KMU was able to persuade the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to issue a statement condemning repression of trade union activists. The International Labour Organisation also passed resolutions calling on the Philippines government to investigate the claims and allow international missions to monitor and report on the human rights situation (interview 5, 2008).

Conclusion

Existing literature on the relationship between global civil society and political violence has tended to assume a clear division between the two. On the one hand, global civil society actors are assumed to be committed to non-violence and are seen as a legitimate force for global political change. On the other hand, non-state armed groups are identified with the

unrestrained violence of 'uncivil' or 'network' wars and are not seen as legitimate political actors. However, it is evident from the results of the empirical research discussed in this paper that participants were not making such stark divisions between groups that have a commitment to non violence and those that hold arms. The question of whether violence by non-state groups is acceptable was found to be not one but several questions, relating to both principled belief and to strategic choices in complex situations. Answers to these questions about the legitimacy of violence were not always dependent on whether the participant was a member of an armed or a non-armed group.

Participants discussed their situation and activities in terms of specific problems faced by their communities; what they needed and lacked. Motivations for group actions and relationships were similarly based on understandings grounded in the situation of the community. In discussing their needs, lacks, problems, motivations, actions, and relationships there was more that united than divided the participants from armed and non-armed groups. To the participants, the tactics or means that a group used to resist were not usually the most important signifiers of inclusion within the bonds of trust and association sometimes identified as civil society. Rather, a demonstrated commitment to responding to the needs and problems of the community, motivated by a concern for the collective interest, was generally a more important criterion for inclusion in relationships of cooperation among opposition groups.

Based on the close analysis of opposition movements in Burma and the Philippines presented in this chapter, it is evident that participants in both armed and non-armed groups share a large degree of common experience and understanding of their political goals and activities. The web of mutual recognition between armed and non-armed organisations in this context is so dense that an analytical distinction between the two seems more of a barrier than an aid to understanding the situation. If an analytical distinction is to be maintained between global civil society and armed organisations, it must be recognised that in practice there is often considerable overlap between the two. However, for situations of social conflict of the kind discussed in this paper, it may be more fruitful to consider both armed and non-armed organisations as participants in global civil society.

5

Legitimacy is Learnt: Processes of Political Change

Learning processes contribute to political change by reconfiguring the expectations, practices, and conceptual framing of actors. Opposition organisations in Burma and in the Philippines make extensive use of formal and informal learning processes in their projects for political change. Learning processes are formally incorporated into alternative education programmes that seek to transform existing systems of schooling and higher education. Informal learning processes are also a key component of many areas of opposition activity, from human rights documentation to political organising.

The case studies of opposition movements in Burma and the Philippines are used below to illustrate both the political character of education and the pedagogical character of politics in these contexts. Even if education has no explicit political content or aims, any form of collective learning still necessarily involves either transforming or reinforcing particular social practices and relationships. Changes in the form and content of education have widespread political effects which are hard to predict in a linear fashion, since the education process is by definition intersubjective. In the extreme case, the extension of education to sectors of a population who have not previously had access to formal learning is a process of major and complex transformation of everyday politics. Sociologists of education have shown how intense debates in developed countries over the form and content of education are linked to competing sets of social norms, in which education is seen as deeply implicated in political, economic, and social development (e.g., Lowe 1997, 47-80). In developing countries where the state plays a strong role in education, such as India, the debates over the form and content and education are even more politicised and intense (Kumar 1998). This is because education is seen as a vital strategic tool that the state can use to achieve social goals, whether contributing to economic development, advancing gender equality or eroding differences in class and caste (Kumar 1998; Kingdon and Muzzamil 2001). In this context, criticism of particular governments for failing to deliver on progress in education can be seen as a recognition of the importance of the state

role in education.

As has been pointed out by Biro (2007), when non-state actors take on state functions in providing public goods, they constitute alternative forms of governance and challenges to state power. The argument in this chapter is that one of the ways this shift occurs is through the emergence of new political norms which favour the alternative political project of the opposition. In the course of providing public goods, including access to education, opposition groups create new political expectations. This much is true of all public goods provided by opposition groups, including healthcare, security, and economic opportunities, in that communities come to expect such public goods to be provided as a condition of political legitimacy. But where the act of providing a public good involves learning processes, as is the case in both formal education and informal training, the potential exists for much greater changes in the political expectations, habitual practices, and cognitive framing of the participants.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The first section examines the complex dynamics of 'educating' in political terms – learning processes that take place within social movements for political change in Burma and the Philippines. In the second section, I discuss the importance of 'documenting' in each case study, as activist organisations learning a very specific norm of political practice. In the third and final section of the chapter, I examine how non-state actors in Burma and the Philippines have learnt different norms of political organising and mobilisation, which have shaped how they engage in everyday acts of political resistance and contest the legitimacy of the state regime.

Educating

Burma

In delivering basic education to their communities, Burmese opposition groups provide a public good that adds to their political legitimacy. At the same time, the learning processes involved in education make lasting changes to the everyday politics of the community, creating new norms based on the expectation and practice of education. As discussed in earlier chapters, education is highly valued at the community level throughout Burma. The inability of the state to provide access to quality education is a major factor in the popular illegitimacy of the SPDC regime. On the other hand, the provision of education by opposition groups contributes to their political legitimacy, both as non-state political actors and as aspirants to state power.

Non-state actors in Burma have a major role in the provision of basic education. Based on the broad cross-section of community-based opposition groups from Burma in this

study, it seems that most of these groups are involved in the direct provision of basic education in their communities. Education is seen as a good in itself, and the provision of education is a primary goal for families and community organisations in Burma. As has been discussed in detail in chapters two and three, the absence or sub-standard quality of state-provided education leaves a gap which opposition groups attempt to fill through their basic education programmes.

These efforts are driven by beliefs in the importance of education in general, and education in the native languages of minority peoples in particular. Opposition groups describe many of their goals, including democratic political change and economic development, as being dependent on raising the education of their communities. Education in general terms is therefore seen as the most basic aspect of capacity building for development. In particular, a recurring theme for participants in the fieldwork for this study was a concern for the preservation of their indigenous languages and cultures. Providing education for their community in their native language and cultural practices was identified as a priority by all of the CBOs based in non-Burman ethnic minority communities. As a spokesperson for the AKSYU put it:

> …some Kachin people, I mean the younger generation they do not know the Kachin language, even [though] they are Kachin. They speak other different language, maybe Thai, Burmese. They don't know their mother language. So we want to develop their language, their mother language (interview 9, 2006).

Although this particular group had identified education in the Kachin language and culture as a priority for their work, they had been unable to secure funding for the education projects they wanted to undertake. They were left feeling that international donors did not share their priorities for the kind of education they felt was needed (interview 9, 2006).

Complaints about the insufficiency of state-provided education in Burma are also linked to problems connected with a perceived lack of political knowledge among the general population. For the opposition groups from Burma, the education system in the country is broken and offers no preparation for the requirements of a democratic society. A spokesperson for the Mon Youth Progressive Organisation (MYPO) explained this lack:

> the students inside Burma graduate from university, but they don't know about the articles of human rights or anything at all about human rights. So it's difficult for us to build the democracy country, when they don't know the basics about human rights (interview 32, 2006).

This quote makes clear an assumption that is not always voiced so explicitly by opposition activists advocating for the importance of an educated population: that it is not just

education per se that is important, but a particular kind of education. In this case, the MYPO spokesperson was making the judgements, widespread among opposition groups from Burma, that human rights are the necessary building blocks of democracy, and that knowledge of human rights is lacking among the general population. Referring to the articles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 'basics' of human rights establishes a minimum criteria of knowledge for a democratic citizen and a clear education goal for opposition movements to meet. The above quote also indicates that a particular set of learning processes has already taken place, by which certain activists in the opposition movement have become convinced of the importance of human rights knowledge.

In areas where state-provided education already exists, but is seen as substandard, opposition groups are responding to an existing community expectation of education as a public good and an entitlement that is not being met by the state. In these areas, opposition groups have responded by setting up parallel education systems which are more responsive to the existing needs and expectations of the community. An example of this dynamic is the establishment of the Mon schools under the leadership of the NMSP (interviews 30 and 33, 2006). The gaps in the state education system are so large, however, that in many cases the establishment of a parallel education system is the first experience that a community has of formal education (interview 21, 2006). Opposition groups sometimes work with religious groups who provide basic community education services. There is a tradition in Burma of primary education being provided by religious organisations, whether Buddhist monasteries or Christian churches. Religious organisations continue to provide basic education, especially in language and literacy. In some areas, religious organisations provide the only available education in the native languages of minority ethnic groups. Christian churches in Kachin state provide literacy education in the Kachin language, while Buddhist monasteries in Arakan and Mon states run classes in the respective local languages. Where possible, opposition groups cooperate with religious groups in their areas to support these educational activities (interviews 11, 23, 30, 2006). The educational activity of the opposition groups therefore either creates or reinforces exisiting local norms of non-state provision of education.

From an outside perspective, the extent of the involvement of political opposition groups in providing basic education is often surprising. In the absence of state-provided education, organisations ranging from trade unions to armed resistance groups take responsibility for educating the children of their members and communities. For instance, soon after the formation of the ABSDF as a student guerrilla army, the organisation established an education department and opened Yaung Ni Oo primary school in the

border camp it controlled. Since its inauguration in 1989, the school has expanded to include middle school students in 1994 and high school students in 1998. In 2006, Yaung Ni Oo comprised 431 students, 82 of whom were boarders, taught by 25 teachers (interview 3, 2006). In a similar response to a situation of need, the local branch of the FTUB in Mae Sot on the Thai-Burma border established a school for the children of the large population of Burmese migrant workers in the town. Because Burmese workers in Thailand generally lack formal residency documents, at best holding temporary work permits, they are unable to access state-funded services, including education for their children. Local union organisers found that the lack of education for children was a core concern for the workers and so worked to find solutions. From ad hoc classes conducted in a spare room at the union office, the FTUB education program had grown by 2006 to accommodate over 100 primary school students. In addition to classes run directly by the union, the FTUB provided support to a nearby independent school for the children of migrant workers (interview 15, 2006).

To the extent that education is available to Burma's ethnic minority peoples on the country's borders, it is largely through the combined efforts of opposition organisations and other CBOs. Education efforts are coordinated by ethnic nationality organisations, with the cooperation of youth groups, women's organisations, and others, including trade unions, church organisations, and even armed groups. Organisations like the Karen National Union (KNU) and New Mon State Party (NMSP) have established education departments to coordinate international aid with local resources to organise schools providing basic education in their communities. Other opposition organisations based in the communities contribute to the provision of education in different ways. Women's organisations take direct responsibility for education projects, such as an early childhood centre run by the KWO, as well as providing support to women and children to enable them to participate in education (interview 25, 2006). Teachers in the schools run by opposition organisations are usually activists themselves and may move back and forward between their roles as schoolteachers and their roles as soldiers or community organisers (interviews 3, 15, 16, 30 and 31, 2006). Opposition-aligned youth groups coordinate labour and donations to build and maintain school buildings in remote villages and areas under opposition control (interviews 11 and 28, 2006). In doing so, opposition groups have created a patchwork system of alternative education that operates in parallel to, and extends beyond, the state education system.

The alternative education system created by the opposition groups makes a major contribution to their project of political change. Altogether, opposition groups make a

massive contribution of material support and human resources to the provision of basic education in Burma. They do so without support from the state and in the face of intense military and political repression. The educational practices initiated by opposition groups – establishing and maintaining schools, training and supporting teachers, encouraging and supporting students to pursue education – create permanent change in the everyday politics of their base communities. Community members who become teachers or students gain expectations of education for future generations, and these expectations become conditions of political legitimacy. Experiences of education also affect the framing of political issues by communities. By promoting education on indigenous culture and language, or on human rights, opposition groups are able to influence gradual change in the framing of political issues.

The Philippines

Like the groups from Burma, opposition groups in the Philippines are engaged in education programmes which contribute to the emergence of new norms by changing expectations, practices, and conceptual framing. While state-provided schooling is more widely available than it is in Burma and generally of a much higher quality, there are still gaps in the ability of ordinary people to access education. Opposition groups focus not only on improving access to basic education, but also on contesting the purpose and content of education. As noted in earlier chapters, opposition groups criticise the state education system for being oriented towards the needs of international capital rather than the national development needs of the Philippines. The alternative model of education proposed by the opposition groups is based on the principles that education should be 'nationalist, scientific and pro-people' (interview 1, 2008). Opposition groups pursue this end through their own programme of political education, which seeks to set a practical example of learning that serves the interests of the people and the country. Through political education, opposition groups also seek to raise expectations amongst students and community members of an education system that works in the public interest. The learning processes involved in the activism of opposition groups, whether connected to the existing formal education system or in the context of broader social activism, contribute to the emergence of new political norms through changed expectations and practices.

For the opposition organisations in the Philippines, the focus of their educational work is on political organising rather than formal education. The activities of the youth organisation Anakbayan are consistent with this pattern, but because the context of the organisation's work is with students and youth, its activities overlap to a greater extent with the learning processes of formal education. As the spokesperson for Anakbayan put it, the

organisation has an alternative programme of education, some of which is 'within the framework of the academe' and some of which is outside the framework of existing formal education:

> we have various courses in our own curriculum that we give to our members and also non-members, the student masses who are in the universites and high schools. So I think this is one way of promoting this kind of [alternative] education and culture. Because it will not just begin when the state performs its role, so we have our own initiatives and activities that we do now (interview 1, 2008).

This way of expressing the practice of alternative education makes clear the role it plays in parallel to existing state education. Alternative education plays both a complementary and prefigurative role in relation to existing processes of formal education. Opposition groups organise extra-curricular education programmes which seek to provide the political analysis that is seen as lacking in state-provided education. At the same time as complementing existing education processes, alternative education prefigures transformation of the provision of core state education. Opposition groups are not content to play the complementary role envisioned for non-state actors by liberal theories of civil society. Rather, their programmes of education are aimed at building a political project which would supplant the current apparatus of the state and transform the education system along the lines prefigured in the present programmes of alternative education.

The priorities of the alternative education programme in the Philippines are therefore synonymous with the agenda of the opposition groups for transformation of the education system and society more generally. These priorities are identified by Anakbayan as learning about 'Philippines society and revolution', 'culture and arts', and 'Imperalism' (interview 1, 2008). The first priority reflects the need for opposition organisations to present an analysis of social conflict that is at odds with the official version taught in schools and covers topics not dealt with in the official curriculum. Discussions led by Anakbayan members acknowledge the protracted civil war in the Philippines, portraying it as a revolutionary struggle (interview 1, 2008). Framing the analysis in this way, even without expressing explicit support or alignment with the underground communist forces, represents a radical break from the kinds of learning that would be possible within the conventional curriculum. The second priority, promoting Filipino culture and arts, has just as political an aim. Opposition groups in the Philippines make widespread use of popular cultural forms such as song and theatre to communicate political messages and build collective identities around political resistance. Political theatre and song performances at community events such as Cordillera Day represent historical struggles, tying memories of resistance to continuing political commitments and linking local and national struggles (interview 3,

2008; fieldwork notes, 2008). Cultural work of this kind is both a learning and a learnt process. By including a focus on culture and arts in their alternative programme of education, Anakbayan builds the personal connection that participants feel to political resistance as well as increasing their capacity to engage in cultural work themselves. Lastly, the focus on imperialism is designed to promote an understanding of the social and economic problems of the Philippines in the context of geopolitical dependence on the United States. The internationalisation of political analysis, together with the promotion of a view of the United States as a neo-colonial and oppressive power, is seen as a key goal of political learning processes by the opposition groups in the Philippines (interviews 1, 5, 6, 2008).

Documenting

When political organisations want to make local issues known to an international audience, they may seek to do so by producing various kinds of reports and documents that explain the local situation. Processes of documentation therefore make aspects of local communities knowable to international outsiders. In this respect, documentation is an outwardly focused process in which it is outsiders doing the learning. But in order to make this international learning possible, the process of documentation must itself be learnt at the local level in a form that renders the information intelligible to the international audience.

The documentation of human rights abuses, for instance, links the everyday experience of state violence to international human rights norms. Human rights documentation is a learning process, in that it involves researching and disseminating information about communities in a way that allows outsiders to learn about certain aspects of their situation. It is also a learnt process, in that the forms of communication and interaction necessarily to document abuses in terms of human rights must themselves be learnt. Framing state violence as an abuse of human rights has the effect of changing expectations and practices at the local level as well as affecting outcomes at the international level. By framing appeals for international attention and pressure in terms that align with international human rights norms, opposition groups are able to add legitimacy to their claims and gain access to established mechanisms of international politics (Sikkink 1993). This argument – that international norms are strategically adopted by local actors to gain access and standing in international contexts – is developed more fully in the following chapter. The related argument that will be developed in this section is that in local contexts, international human rights norms function as framing concepts which are adapted to meet the needs of local circumstances.

Burma

The work of community-based groups in documenting violence and abuses by the military in terms of human rights norms is a different, though connected, process from the efforts detailed above to educate the population in Burma about human rights. While human rights education aims to change the ways that local people think about the world and frame political demands, human rights documentation aims to take existing grievances and frame them in terms of human rights norms for an international audience. The purpose for doing this is to gain access to international fora and to established mechanisms by which the state can be held accountable and pressured to abide by norms of human rights. In other words, while human rights education is an attempt to influence the normative conceptions of the population, activism based on human rights documentation is an effort to normalise the practices of the state.

Documentation of human rights abuses in Burma is a major effort oriented towards providing the raw material required for lobbying international organisations and states to put pressure on the SPDC regime. These international lobbying efforts, which are detailed in the following chapter, require reports based on up-to-date and specific data of human rights violations. As the spokesperson for the FTUB put it, these lobbying efforts require the 'year round work of the human rights documentation' (interview 14, 2006). Local organisers for the FTUB and its affiliates described the difficulty and expense of collecting these reports, which require regular dangerous trips into territory controlled by the SPDC military (interview 15 and 16, 2006). As an organiser for the FTUB described, the process of human rights documentation had to be learnt from scratch, initially using forms adapted from a Swiss human rights NGO:

> they gave six forms, about the perpetrator, the victim, which is very good, also complete I think. But also too long and a bit complex. They want to find the victim's story and update it and also who is the perpetrator. But the reports we do are just general and villagers will not know who is the perpetrator and the rank, the age, or even what battalion it is (interview 15, 2006).

The problem here is not that villagers are unobservant or ignorant, but rather that the distinctions which are important for the process of human rights documentation are irrelevant to the everyday politics of the community. While it is important from a human rights perspective to identify specific offenders who can be held accountable for violations, local communities may understand the same incidents as the acts of a generic enemy, in this case the SPDC or the *Tatmadaw*.

Documentation of human rights abuse in Burma generally involves translating grievances which are framed in different terms and with substantive differences in

emphasis to those of international norms of human rights. When asked about the terms in which grievances were expressed, the spokesperson for the Karen Women's Organisation said that:

> Actually [the grievance is] not because they understand that it's against their rights or it's a violation. They say it's not fair, it's not good to come when we live peacefully, to come and destroy and you want to be the superior, try to take over everything, want to be the boss, like dictator. We live peacefully. Why they come and kill us? Why they come and take over our village, take over our place? (interview 25, 2006).

The normative content of this expression links the expectation of the local community that they should be allowed to live in peace with their rejection of imposed hierarchy, domination, and state violence. Variations on these themes are repeated by activists from diverse CBOs in reporting the reactions of their communities to state repression. If one theme can be generalised across these responses, it is the desire to be left in peace which comes through so clearly in the above quote. There is an appeal to norms here which are distinct from the norms of the 'rule of law' and 'responsibility to protect' assumed in human rights frameworks, where the state is expected to be the guarantor of liberty and held accountable for lapses in this role. In the everyday norms of communities in Burma however, the state is viewed as an external threat to the well-being of the community. A Shan proverb quoted by Tannenbaum (1991) states that ordinary people should fear five 'enemies': fire, flood, drought, famine, and government officials.

As detailed in Chapter Two, communities in Burma experience the state through the encroachment into their daily lives of military expansion, predatory tax collection, and corrupt regulation. The norms of everyday politics are oriented towards the assumption that the state is an oppressive force that is best avoided and evaded. The best that can be expected of agents of the state is that they can be persuaded or forced to leave the community alone to live in peace. Where agents of the state persist in interfering with the daily life of the community, people find ways to resist, accommodate, or escape the demands that the state puts on them. The documentation and presentation of these grievances against the state in the form of violations of human rights norms should therefore be understood as a strategic form of resistance to state power as it is experienced by the community. Documentation of human rights violations implies a certain recognition and acceptance of international human rights norms. But the meaning that these norms take on in local contexts and the political values that underlie their adoption depend on the everyday politics of the local situation.

The Philippines

Opposition organisations in the Philippines have been active in documenting human rights violations by the state, while emphasising that these violations should be understood within a wider context of oppression. As the secretary-general of BAYAN puts it:

> The human rights side of the Philippines has been quite prominent, so we want to show a link with the underlying basis which are the economic conditions and establish a logical link with the incidence of abuses and the extreme situation of poverty and exploitation in the country (interview 2, 2008).

The documentation of state violence and political repression in the Philippines is therefore undertaken by opposition organisations in a way that makes use of a human rights framework while also constantly making links to broader issues of oppression. Opposition organisations share the view that drawing attention to human rights abuses by the Philippines state is important in order to bring international pressure to bear on the government. However, opposition groups also see it as important that documentation and reporting of human rights abuses situates the abuse within the context of systemic inequality and state violence (interviews 2, 3, 4, 2008). For instance, as the spokesperson for GABRIELA puts it, women's rights need to be understood within the particular social contexts in which women live:

> When we talk about women's rights we talk about women's rights vis-a-vis the situation that they face. ... Even though they are gender-based issues, you can look at the analysis and discover that it's worsened by certain government policies that put people in the position where there is so much poverty (interview 4, 2008).

This view, that women's rights need to be understood in their political and economic context, mirrors the general statement about human rights made by the BAYAN spokesperson above. The argument being made here is not that human rights should be linked to politics and economics in an abstract sense, but that the concrete experience of gender oppression and political oppression more generally cannot be separated from the political and economic aspects of the situation in which it occurs. Advocacy for human rights is also placed in the context of social relationships in that improvements in human rights are understood to be a result of collective struggle and mobilisation.

Documentation of human rights violations is seen by the Philippines opposition groups as a process which requires an engagement with the everyday politics of communities as well as an analysis of broad patterns of oppression. This view is shared by Karapatan, the largest national human rights organisation in the Philippines, formed by an alliance of social movements and human rights organisations. Karapatan takes a firmly political

approach to the documentation of human rights abuses, arguing that '[t]he struggle of the Filipino people for national liberation and social emancipation provides the framework for human rights advocacy' (Karapatan 2007). The involvement of Karapatan alongside the BAYAN-affiliated organisations in international efforts to pressure the Philippines over its human rights record, which are reviewed in more detail in the following chapter, show a recognition of international human rights norms. However, in speaking to an international as well as a domestic audience, Karapatan consistently emphasises the connection between human rights and broader struggles. In a statement condemning the continuation of 'state terrorism and impunity' under the newly elected government of Benigno Aquino, Karapatan described itself as 'crying out for justice with the mass of the Filipino people' (Karapatan 2010). The statement levels political criticism at President Aquino, describing his government as the 'U.S.–Aquino Regime' and comparing his start in the Presidency unfavourably to the early gestures made by his mother, former President Corazon Aquino, who released political prisoners upon coming to power. The statement by Karapatan goes on to describe the continuation of state violence under Aquino as 'horrendous' and 'appalling'. With this kind of language, human rights organisations are speaking primarily to a popular audience, whether domestically or internationally, rather than to the international elite of UN diplomats and officials. This shows that the strength of human rights advocacy in the Philippines lies as much in popular organising as in appeals to international elites.

The political values and corresponding ideas about 'the good life' that can be drawn from the analysis presented in this study show that local participants engage with human rights norms in ways that differ from international assumptions. In particular, the normative assumption that the state can and should be an enabling force for liberties and entitlements is an element of human rights norms which is at most a distant ideal within the everyday politics and experiences of many communities. More proximal to the everyday politics of the communities are values of independence and autonomy, expressed in terms of a vision of a good life in which communities would be left alone by the state. When opposition activists from Burma document abuses by the SPDC regime and call for international pressure on the basis of these reports, they are acting on the need of their communities for respite from attacks by state forces. There is no expectation that the state in Burma can immediately be transformed into an enabling and protecting force for human rights. Rather, the hope is that certain elements of the state can be persuaded to withdraw or ease the oppressive pressure on communities, with a consequent amelioration of the suffering that these communities experience. The ideal of a state that enables and protects human rights is a longer-term goal of political transformation.

Organising

Political organising, from first contact to mobilisation to action, involves collective learning processes. The processes by which a community is mobilised for political resistance are referred to by many authors as 'repertoires of contention' (Tarrow and Tilly 2008). In the social movement literature, it is commonly recognised that repertoires are learnt patterns of collective behaviour (see McAdam 1995, 236). However, in looking for explanations for the diffusion and reproduction of repertoires, social movement theorists tend to focus on the macro-historical processes involved in the emergence of social categories and objects of contention (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001, 144-159), or on individualised explanations of social and political 'entrepreneurship'.

Burma

Opposition activists from Burma make deliberate use of learning processes to build the capacity of their organisations and communities. In discussing education in terms of capacity building, participants referred to various aspects of their communities' collective development as being enhanced by the education and training efforts of their organisations. In their relations with their communities, opposition groups from Burma place a great deal of emphasis on political education oriented towards building the capacity of the people for political action. The political education programmes undertaken by opposition groups can be analysed in different ways and are discussed below in terms of political mobilisation and norm diffusion. The description of these educational projects in terms of capacity building implies that often the primary purpose and effect of these programmes is to introduce their participants to new forms of political subjectivity and political action. Indeed, the transformation of Burma's political culture and the introduction of ordinary people to new forms of political action are widely cited as motivations for political education programmes by opposition groups.

There is a widespread feeling among opposition activists from Burma that the general population lacks knowledge about politics and that this is a major barrier to political change. Variations on this idea were specifically expressed in their own words by participants in at least 16 of the 35 interviews conducted for this study. This opinion seems to be a matter of consensus across the opposition movement, as it was expressed independently by members of all the categories of groups in the study, with no contradictory opinions expressed (interviews 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 30 and 32, 2006).

For many activists, their concern with the lack of political education in Burma is based on their own experience of the difference that political education and training has made in

their personal outlook and commitment to political change. As a result of their own experience of feeling enlightened by education, they are concerned for those they see as unenlightened due to their lack of education. As one leader of the BWU put it:

> Before training I didn't know everything, even though I was involved in politics, even though I was outside Burma. Later when I got the training, it changed a little bit and so myself is like "have to do something, have to involve in our nation to change something, bad government or situation", I realised this (interview 13, 2006).

As well as demonstrating a strong commitment to the transformative power of political education, this statement conveys the sense of collective duty attached to education in this context. The effect of the training offered by opposition groups is to create a sense of belonging and attachment to a nation and a duty to get involved in efforts to change the government and the political situation.

Youth groups in Arakan state were active in organising what they called 'political defiance training' in their state (interviews 1, 11, 2006). The manner in which political defiance training was discussed by the spokesperson for the AASYC demonstrated the importance of this learning process in the organisation's vision of political change. Referring to the effect of repression and poverty on the level of popular political consciousness, the spokesperson said that for ordinary people:

> For their daily survival they are always thinking. They have nothing in their mind. That's why we say they don't have any knowledge of politics. So we have to, for the inside people, we have to get some sort of political defiance tactics, some sort of knowledge of political defiance. Only the people who are connected to the organisations in the liberated area know about that, but ordinary people don't know (interview 1, 2006).

This statement clearly connects the need for training in political defiance tactics with the perceived lack of political knowledge amongst the general population, to the point where their minds are claimed to be literally empty. There is a significant distinction made in this quote between people connected to opposition organisations and ordinary people who lack these political connections and consequently lack knowledge about politics. This distinction is mapped onto a spatial separation between those living in areas under the control of opposition groups, described as the 'liberated area', and the population of central Burma who are described as 'inside people'. This particular mapping of zones of knowledge is common in the political expression of opposition activists from Burma, with the same distinction often drawn between 'inside' as a zone of repression and ignorance and 'outside' as a zone of freedom and knowledge. The border between inside and outside in

this collective perception is particularly porous and corresponds to overlapping zones of political influence, of the SPDC regime and opposition groups respectively. As in the above quote, this distinction often comes with an expression of the need to extend the freedom and knowledge represented by the 'outside' political organisations into the 'inside' of the country, in this case in the form of tactics of political defiance.

The use of the term 'political defiance' in Burma has an interesting and relatively short history, which can be traced directly to the activity of a retired US soldier and non-violence trainer, Colonel Robert Helvey. Helvey, who was the US military attaché to Burma from 1983 to 1985, first delivered training on non-violent resistance in the KNU headquarters at Manerplaw in 1992. He coined the term 'political defiance' as a more palatable term to appeal to KNLA General Bo Mya, who found the concept of non-violence too soft (Bacher 2003, 10; Spencer 2008, 13). The training delivered by Helvey was based on the strategic non-violence approach developed by Gene Sharp and was delivered in association with the Albert Einstein Institute (AEI) established by Sharp. Sharp also made visits to Manerplaw and took a personal interest in developing the capacity of Burmese opposition groups to engage in strategic non-violent resistance (Sharp 2003, ix). Since the initial contacts made by Helvey and Sharp, the involvement of their organisations in delivering non-violence training has expanded considerably. They have directly provided 'political defiance' training for over 700 activists in the Burmese opposition groups on the Thai-Burma border and Bangkok, Delhi and Oslo (AEI 2000, 7). These programmes have been supported by funding from private donors (Bacher 2003, 10) and from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). As discussed in the previous chapter, opposition groups from Burma have found that international support has shifted away from organisations connected to armed struggle. The promotion of non-violent political resistance by organisations like AEI, and the support that these programmes are receiving in official aid, are part of learning processes driven by this shift in international priorities.

The political defiance training provided by AEI appears to have had a significant effect on the political practice of the Burmese opposition groups. The terminology and tactics of political defiance and strategic non-violence have been widely adopted by the opposition groups, even by those who also engage in armed resistance, such as the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) and All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) (interviews 2, 10, 2006). The establishment of a political defiance committee by the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) umbrella group in 1993, and the fact that this group continues to meet and coordinate activities among the opposition groups (AEI 2010) is also significant. While some of this effect may be explained by groups using new terms to describe existing

activities, the techniques of political defiance promoted by Helvey and Sharp appear to have been picked up enthusiastically by several groups, most notably the Arakanese youth groups (interviews 1, 11, 2006).

> Because we have some people, trained people, like trained youth or students. So we will have to give training in the border areas, or inside, very secretly. From that trained people we can directly mobilise the students through their network, through their friends. After that, step by step, we have to go to the political defiance campaigns (interview 1, 2006).

The activity described by these groups in terms of political defiance included both political activism and further training. In other words, opposition activists are actively engaged in political defiance themselves, as well as in training others to join the campaigns. This is significant because it shows how the learning processes by which norms of practice are established can have a multiplier effect, in this case when participants are motivated and equipped to deliver further training themselves.

The learning processes by which political defiance tactics have become established as norms of practice in certain opposition groups show the impact that international connections can have on local practice. But even in this case, the influence of GCSOs in promoting normative change is not absolute and should not be overstated. Ultimately, the success or failure of the learning processes required to institute normative change depend on the willingness of local actors to engage. Local actors judge the learning opportunities offered by international engagement on the basis of their existing political goals. Learning processes and outcomes are embedded within the existing political and social relations of local actors, as are the norms that emerge from learnt practice. In the case of political defiance, training programmes for villagers are often more a matter of encouraging and coordinating existing patterns of resistance than of introducing alien forms of political practice. The kinds of tactics discussed in terms of political defiance follow a familiar pattern of everyday resistance, turning acts of expression like singing, joking, or praying into acts of resistance, defacing government posters, ignoring orders, or delaying compliance (interview 1, 2006). These 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985) are employed in similar forms across Burma and the wider region, independent of international engagement (Scott 1986; Malseed 2009). The argument here is not that international engagement produces local practice ex nihilo. Rather, norms of practice and resistance are seen as emerging from a combination of local social relations and international influences. The example of 'political defiance' in Burma shows how learning processes initiated and influenced by an outsider can have a framing and legitimating effect in relation to particular local practices. International influence did have an effect in this case, in encouraging

political activists to pay attention to the potential for ordinary people to engage in everyday forms of resistance. Somewhat paradoxically, one of the main effects of outside influence in this case was to make visible the political potential of existing local practices.

The Philippines

The mass community-based organisations in the Philippines, led by the affiliates of BAYAN, describe themselves collectively as a 'national liberation movement' committed to nationalist, anti-imperialist, and 'pro-people' goals (interview 1, 2008). While the nationalist and anti-imperialist aspects are often given most prominence in articulating the specific goals of the movement (e.g., interviews 2 and 5, 2008), it will be argued here that the pro-people orientation of the movements is the most significant factor in shaping the stategies of political resistance found in the Philippines. This is because the pro-people orientation of the organisations includes a commitment to learning from the everyday experiences of the people, and to incorporating this learning into the process of developing the goals and strategies of the organisation. One of the ways this is done is through the practice of 'basic masses integration' in which activists are encouraged to spend time living and working with ordinary people in different parts of the country and in different economic sectors. The spokesperson for the Anakbayan youth organisation explained the importance of this process:

> The basic masses integration is very effective in terms of how we could really strengthen our commitment and belief and how we could really begin to understand our analysis of our society. Because we could not really grasp our theory if we are not integrated with the actual practice from which the theory was developed. So I think we will be able to have a better grasp of what we are fighting for and of our analysis if we can actually see or learn from the actual experiences of the people, of the basic masses. So it's not a theory in itself, but a theory based on the practice of our people, the practice of the basic masses, their everyday life and their everyday struggle... (interview 1, 2008).

The significance of the learning processes involved here is not in the organisation's claim to be 'pro-people'; after all, no political organisation would admit to being 'anti-people'. The more significant aspect is the set of practices that go along with the claim, in which activists follow through on their pro-people commitment through a sustained engagement with the everyday politics of their organisation's base communities. The above quote illustrates two main organisational strengths of the learning processes associated with 'basic masses integration'. Firstly, the learning experience for the activists is an opportunity for consciousness raising, deepening their commitment to the work of the organisation. Activists from more privileged backgrounds are exposed to the realities of life for the

majority of the population and are able to supplement their intellectual commitment to the goals of the organisation with first-hand experience of the everyday lives of ordinary people. Activists from less privileged backgrounds are also able to experience the similarities and differences of life in other regions or sectors and are consequently better equipped to generalise from their own experience.

The second benefit of the learning processes described in the above quote is that the political theory and analysis of the organisation becomes strongly connected to the everyday politics of its base communities. For Anakbayan members, spending time immersed in the everyday lives of poor communities offers an opportunity to re-engage with the political purpose of their pro-people ideology. It also allows organisers to develop their theory and analysis in line with the everyday politics of the community. To the extent that basic masses integration becomes an integral part of the ongoing learning processes of the organisation, it functions as an effective form of praxis as defined by Freire (Freire, 2000, 51), connecting activists with base communities and theory with practice.

For the BAYAN-affiliated organisations in the Philippines, processes of mutual learning are built into the normal practice of community organising. The initial stages in the typical process of community organising, as described by the GABRIELA spokesperson, are that:

> people come to us and ask for help, so we send an organiser to the area and then part of the work that the organiser does is what we call a social investigation, to find out the situation of the women in the area. That's when the organising starts. We develop local leaders as well as local organisers to take over the work (interview 4, 2008).

This process of community organising contains two complementary forms of learning processes. The first, described here as 'social investigation', involves the organiser engaging with women in the community to learn about their situation and needs. In the process, women from the community are identified to be trained as organisers who will coordinate local social programs and political campaigns in liaison with the local chapter of GABRIELA. This process could be viewed as a socially embedded form of the participatory action research approach outlined above. The difference being, however, that by skipping the mediating intervention of the western(ised) academic, the political learning strategies followed by organisations like GABRIELA come closer to the ideal of dialogical education articulated by Freire (2000) than do the PAR approaches inspired by the Brazilian educator. The process of reciprocal political learning exhibited here by GABRIELA is the general model of community organising followed by each of the BAYAN-affiliated organisations in the Philippines. The interaction is dialogical in the sense articulated by Freire, not just because it is based on a dialogue, but because the effect of the

dialogue is to lessen rather than reinforce the differential power relations implicit in the learning process.

Conclusion

Everyday processes of political learning have an important place in the practice of democratic resistance groups. Based on the study of community-based opposition groups in Burma and the Philippines, a range of learning processes was identified, centred on practices of educating, documenting, and organising. Education processes range from formal schooling designed to replace or compensate for the absence of state-provided education, to extra-curricular supplementary programmes of political education for students, to programmes of vocational training targeted at the needs of the community. Documentation for the purposes of human rights reports is designed to promote international learning about the situation of the base communities of the organisations and in turn requires education of organisers and activists in techniques of documentation. Political actors involved in community organising also make explicit use of training programmes. This includes the practice of non-violence training in Burma, the more informal but nevertheless conscious use of the effect of education on political loyalty and commitment, and the deliberate use of collective and reciprocal processes of learning such as the Philippines practice of 'basic masses integration'. Through these collective learning processes, the organisations further their integration with their base communities as well as promoting processes of social change in line with their democratic values. By contributing to change in expectations, habitual practice, and conceptual framing, learning processes lead to the emergence of new norms within the everyday politics of communities. While international actors can be influential sources of ideational and material resources which facilitate learning processes, these processes are situated within everyday politics and produce political change on the basis of already existing social relations in local contexts.

6

Unequal Learning: Building International Legitimacy

In addition to engaging with the everyday politics of their base communities, opposition groups fulfil specialised roles, such as advocacy, lobbying, and fundraising, which involve interaction with political elites at the state and international level. As outlined in the previous chapter, these interactions tend to require particular forms and skills of communication which must be learnt. This chapter emphasises the bi-directional nature of this learning process, in which organisations must balance the requirements of elite and everyday politics, while translating between international and local contexts. It also draws attention to the unequal and complex dynamics of power involved in the learning processes that are necessary for engagement with international politics. In order to successfully translate the needs of their communities into an international context, opposition activists must learn to move between radically different modes of communication, each with its own associated expectations, practices, and frames. Likewise, activists who are engaged in international contexts must become adept at translating and adapting international norms in a way that is commensurate with the everyday politics of their own communities.

The main themes that emerged from the research relating to international engagement with Global Civil Society Organisations (GCSOs) in Burma and the Philippines were raising international awareness; international lobbying; and support for local political organising. In order to investigate these different aspects of the relations between local community-based organisations and GCSOs, this chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, I examine how community-based organisations in the two cases have engaged in raising international awareness through attempts at building international, issue-specific campaigns in the case of Burma, and 'people-to-people' solidarity practices in the case of the Philippines. The second section explores how, in both cases, non-state actors have engaged in international lobbying efforts which are directly targeted at influencing decisions and courses of action at the international level. The third section discusses how

community-based organisations in Burma and the Philippines have sought to attract international support for political organising activities. This section concentrates in particular on the difficulties that local organisations often face in building international support for explicitly political goals, and the challenge of ensuring that their particular political needs – such as the need for secrecy and confidentiality in the case of Burmese activist organisations, and the desire for 'principled' support in the case of the Philippines organisations – are understood and accepted by external actors. The chapter concludes by discussing the need for local community-based organisations to retain sufficient autonomy and control over their political practices, tactics, principles, and goals in their dealings with global civil society organisations; a control and autonomy which it is often difficult for them to sustain.

Raising International Awareness

Burma

Participants from many different organisations said that raising international awareness of the situation in Burma is an important part of their political efforts. The spokesperson for the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) described getting international awareness as the main focus of exile activity:

> The reason that we are still here in Thailand is because we want the international to know what is really happening with us... So inside activity and exile activity are always in communication with each other, to find information inside and inform the international to know what is happening (interview 34, 2006).

Opposition groups from Burma want to show the world that the SPDC military regime is a 'bad government', as one soldier from the KNLA put it (interview 19, 2006). Activists want the international community to be aware of the suffering and insecurity caused by the SPDC regime (interviews 2, 9 and 22, 2006). Opposition groups are also motivated by a desire to counter what they describe as false propaganda by the SPDC by raising international awareness of the true situation in Burma (interviews 2, 9 and 34). The efforts of community-based organisations to raise international awareness are therefore, at least in part, an effort to undermine the legitimacy of the regime in the country.

Some organisations seek international awareness because of an international dimension to their situation, such as investment by foreign companies. Communities affected by large-scale development may seek the assistance of GCSOs to put pressure on foreign investors. For instance, organisations from communities in Arakan state have combined to form a campaign against the exploration and development of the Shwe gas fields (interview 1,

2006). The development is predicted to be a major source of revenue for the regime and the campaign is aimed at preventing this, as well as resisting the negative effects on the local communities of construction work using forced labour and militarisation of the area (Shwe Gas Movement 2009; interview 1, 2006). A spokesperson for the Shwe gas campaign who had also served as a leader of an Arakanese community organisation said that the campaigners realised early on that they would need to enlist the help of international activist and advocacy groups to raise the international profile of the campaign: 'We don't have experience with that, that's why we work with Earth Rights International, they help us a lot ... they have a lot of experience how to lobby, how to make a big campaign.' (interview 1, 2006). Working with Earth Rights International, the Shwe gas campaign was able to make contact with activist groups across the Asian region. Campaign groups were formed in Thailand, Bangladesh, and India on Burma's borders and networked with groups in other countries. These included Korean International Solidarity, an activist network which assisted the campaign to organise protests in South Korea directly targeting Daewoo, a major investor in the gas fields, as well as a lobby trip in which members of the campaign were able to meet with Korean legislators and civil society groups (interview 1, 2006).

While it is hard to judge the success of a campaign which is ongoing and has not yet achieved its major goals, some aspects of the relationships formed between the organisations can be assessed. In terms of accountability, it is apparent that ERI made significant efforts to ensure that their assistance did not result in the community organisations losing control of their campaign. ERI's first major involvement in the campaign consisted of facilitating an in-depth workshop discussion with campaign leaders, which functioned as a mutual learning exchange and an opportunity to assess what each organisation could contribute. Further such meetings were held at later stages of the campaign and involved ERI members travelling to India and Bangladesh to meet the regional campaign groups. Therefore, one of the contributions of the international organisation was oriented towards deepening the involvement of the local community organisations and building their capacity to strategise and direct the campaign. In addition to these planning meetings, ERI organised training sessions in methods of documentation and reporting. These methods, based on those developed for investigating and reporting on human rights abuses, were familiar to ERI through their experience in international lobbying and legal cases (Earthrights International 2009; interview 1, 2006). In the case of the Shwe gas campaign, ERI's assistance was appreciated because the local groups had decided that raising international awareness was an important step for the campaign.

Therefore, ERI's experience with the styles of communication and documentation required for international campaigning was of strategic benefit.

Working with a loose network of international advocacy and sectoral organisations, Burmese trade unions have had some success with international campaigns against foreign investment in Burma. International campaigns have persuaded some high-profile and western-based multinational companies such as Pepsi-Cola, Levi-Strauss and Triumph International to pull out of manufacturing operations in Burma. In addition, the US state governments of Massachusetts, Texas, and California were for some time supporting a boycott of companies doing business in Burma. These campaigns were largely coordinated by activist coalitions such as Burma Campaign UK and the Free Burma Campaign USA, which were formed in the style of advocacy organisations, but relying more on volunteer labour than on financial contributions. Sectoral organisations, such as student associations and trade unions, had also supported the campaigns. After some high profile successes at persuading companies to withdraw from Burma, the campaign has died down. The general secretary of the FTUB suggested that this was due to a lack of further high-profile targets based in the UK and USA (interview 14, 2006).

The fickle nature of such international activist campaigns can be a source of frustration for local community-based organisations who must continue to work with the long-term realities of their situation while activists in western countries have moved on to the latest cause celebré. Trade unions working with Burmese migrant workers in the garment sector of Thailand had tried to raise awareness of working conditions among American NGOs because most of the products of the factories were destined for the US market (interview 15, 2006). However, they had received little response, and there was a lack of international advocacy organisations with the capacity or commitment to engage on the local level. These local organisations had also had negative experiences with NGO involvement in community organising and felt that it was best to rely on other local organisations they knew and trusted (interview 15, 2006). These experiences are discussed in more detail below, under 'support for political organising'.

As well as acting as intermediaries to reach a wider public, GCSOs are seen by some community groups as partners in building international networks of mutual support. For groups with experience of international engagement, networking with GCSOs is an extension of their networking with other local groups. As the spokesperson for the KWO, one of the more internationally active women's organisations, said: 'it is very important to network with other women's organisations in every country so that it is stronger. If the network is stronger it is more powerful.' (interview 25, 2006). The spokesperson went on

to describe how women's groups in other countries can help by advocating on behalf of women who are suffering in Burma, lobbying their own governments to put pressure on the Burmese regime, and organising campaigns and demonstrations in solidarity with women from Burma. Organisers from the BWU described the 1995 Beijing conference as their first international exposure and their first opportunity to meet with 'international level' women's groups. This was seen as an important first step in getting international awareness of the situation for women in Burma and for the organisation (interview 13, 2006).

Smaller organisations with fewer international contacts talked in similar terms about their local networks, particularly the umbrella organisations which gave them an indirect opportunity to engage internationally. As one participant from the AKSYU put it:

> we urgently need the international community to know our problems and the international community to involve in Burma, to help us and to get democracy, working together. So it is very important in my opinion to join and cooperate with other student groups for democracy and peace for Burma (interview 9, 2006).

Reaching an international audience was described as an important motivation for this group to join the Student and Youth Council of Burma (SYCB), which regularly released media statements as well as taking part in international networking and lobbying activities. In addition to their membership in these local networks, the AKSYU described the positive relationship they had formed with the regional Asian Students' Association (ASA). The participants were impressed that the leadership of the ASA had specifically sought out and invited individual ethnic student organisations to join the association in order to broaden the range of their engagement with the Burmese student movement. They were also happy that the ASA took a political stand against authoritarian and military regimes and that this was applied in the case of Burma with clear support for democratic change. Finally, the ASA was seen as having a genuine interest in engaging with the local organisation. The ASA had sent a delegation to visit the local group and discuss their activities, plans for the future, and the most important issues to raise at the regional and international level. This approach had left the local youth group with a very positive impression of this international sectoral organisation: 'I think they have a good understanding of the Burma issue, that's why they came and approached to our organisation, what activity do we do, and plans for the future. Yeah, they care.' (interview 9, 2006).

This willingness to engage with individual ethnic organisations on their own terms seemed to be unfortunately rare among international organisations involved in Burma. The spokesperson for the PSLF felt that NGOs preferred to deal with the umbrella alliance

organisations because they didn't have time to meet with every ethnic organisation (interview 34, 2006). This also led to a feeling that the NGOs lacked knowledge or weren't interested in finding out about the individual ethnic organisations and their particular issues. Similarly, the spokesperson of KWAT felt that NGOs based on the Thai border were not interested in learning about the language and culture of the minority ethnic groups. Her impression was that to the extent that locally based NGO staff were learning a local language, they were learning Burmese rather than other ethnic languages (interview 23, 2006). Participants often did not distinguish between different types of GCSOs and used the term NGO broadly. However, these concerns apply most readily to advocacy and service GCSOs with a significant local presence.

While members of minority ethnic groups often felt that GCSOs were uninterested in learning about their particular issues, culture, and language, these differences were very important to them. Many participants from the different ethnic organisations interviewed felt that it was important that the international community know of the existence of their people. Representatives of the Mon, Karen, Kachin, Arakan, Palaung, and Zomi organisations interviewed all wanted the international community to know of their existence as well as the issues and problems they faced. This need for international recognition was linked for these groups with a need to maintain their own distinct language and culture. Members of the ethnic minority organisations interviewed saw international engagement as an opportunity to work against the regime's policy of 'Burmanisation', under which the language and culture of the Burman majority were imposed at the expense of minority cultures. As the spokesperson for the Mon Unity League said, in discussing the danger of losing their culture and traditions: 'The politics is like a forum, but when we get the forum we don't have anything to show or perform on the forum, like culture, literature, identity, traditions.' (interview 29, 2006). He went on to say that the lack of a political forum in Burma makes it important for the Mon people to have a presence on the international stage, but at the same time it is important for them to work on their own culture with their own people, so that when the representatives get to the forum, they have something to say (interview 29, 2006).

The Philippines

Each of the opposition organisations in the Philippines covered in this study is engaged in raising international awareness of the political situation in the country. As with the Burmese organisations, raising international awareness is seen as important and constitutes a key part of the agency of the groups. In contrast to the Burmese organisations, however, international awareness in the Philippines is framed in terms of a broader goal of

international solidarity. Members of the Philippines opposition organisations describe their non-state international relationships in terms of 'people-to-people solidarity', a concept that links all three types of international engagement discussed in this chapter: awareness, lobbying, and support. This section focuses on the agency and motivations of Philippines organisations for raising international awareness of the situation in the country through people-to-people solidarity.

In international campaigns like the 'Stop the Killings Campaign', organisations from the Philippines have sought to mobilise international pressure on the government of their country to reduce political repression. As the secretary-general of BAYAN explains, the first pre-requisite of such campaigns is international awareness of the situation, on the basis of which, solidarity actions and material support may be mobilised and pressure brought to bear on the government through international channels. In coordinating the international public awareness campaign, BAYAN sought to cast a wide net to find partner organisations in foreign countries: 'We would have engagements with non-governmental organisations, human rights groups, other people's organisations, unions, sectoral organisations, church groups also' (interview 2, 2008). At the same time, BAYAN built links with international organisations, including the UN and the EU, and met with missions from such organisations visiting the Philippines. A similar approach was taken by the KMU in seeking international attention to the repression of trade unions in the Philippines. The KMU secretary-general reported that the organisation had raised the issue in talks with trade union centres in many countries, including Belgium, Germany, Canada, the USA, Australia, and Japan. These organisations in turn supported the issue of trade union repression being raised through the ITUC and ILO (interview 5, 2008).

Opposition organisations in the Philippines also raised awareness of their situation and work through exchange programmes with other political organisations, regionally and internationally. A spokesperson for GABRIELA explained how such 'exposure tours' are organised through international non-state networks:

> One of the things which our network does is that they send us exposurists. They come here and they ask us to facilitate their visiting areas in the urban and well as in the rural areas, basically our chapters and other networks which we have nationwide. That's how they get to know more of our work. And when we go to their countries that's also what we do, we ask them to host us in terms of introducing us to the people who they work with, the organisations which they have helped set up (interview 4, 2008).

A typical tour includes the 'exposurists' receiving briefings from the host organisation, visiting or spending time with local communities, and taking part in public events, such as

conferences or protests organised by the host group (interviews 1,3, 4, 5 and 6 2008). The basic format was followed by each of the groups in the study in hosting visiting sectoral organisations from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The chairperson of Anakbayan emphasised the importance of such exposure tours, which the youth organisation runs for the overseas visitors it hosts:

> it is very effective in terms of exchanging experiences and developing mutual cooperation. Because in reality you cannot get political or any other kind of support if they do not know what kind of struggle you are in (interview 1, 2008).

The goal of hosting exposure visits is therefore to raise awareness in the broadest sense of the activities and situation of the organisation. Allowing visitors to experience something of the local conditions and meet the people directly affected by issues such as political repression and poverty makes these issues seem more real and immediate to outsiders. The potential for meaningful solidarity and support from outside organisations is thereby increased.

The people-to-people solidarity practices of the Philippines opposition organisations raise awareness for the host organisations as much as for the visitors. As stated in the above quote from the Gabriela spokesperson, the benefits of exposure tours can be reciprocated when hosts visit the home countries of their visitors. But the experience of hosting outside visitors also has benefits for the host organisation in terms of international awareness. As the secretary-general of BAYAN explained, the Philippines organisations can always find something to learn from engaging with members of social movements and opposition groups from elsewhere:

> We love interacting with the activists from abroad. We look at for example how organised these Korean protesters are, or how diligent some Japanese comrades are, or how our US comrades would organise their protest actions with big alliances (interview 2, 2008).

So one tangible outcome of exposure tours is the exchange of information and tactics for mobilising protest action; the diffusion of repertoires of contention (Tarrow and Tilly, 2006). Less tangible, but according to the BAYAN spokesperson just as relevant in motivating international contacts, is the personal inspiration and motivation gained from meeting with people engaged in similar struggles in different contexts.

International Lobbying

Lobbying can be distinguished in two respects from raising awareness in a more general sense. First, lobbying is communication which is strategically directed towards the

immediate goal of influencing a decision or course of action. Second, lobbying is communication directed towards political elites who are in control of decision-making. International lobbying therefore consists of strategic communication directed at international political elites or at political elites in other countries for some international purpose.

Burma

In the last two decades, international lobbying has been a major focus of the Burmese opposition movement's efforts to achieve political change in Burma. In recent times, this lobbying work has been coordinated by the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB), an umbrella group comprising most of the organisations from Burma actively opposing the regime. NCUB chairman Maung Maung, a trade union official and current FTUB President, describes international lobbying as a vital activity for the organisations from Burma: 'we have to reach out to the international movement because we could not do things on our own' (interview 14, 2006).

As non-state organisations with no formal legal status in any country, the Burmese opposition groups have had to work hard to gain access to diplomatic channels of communication which are normally reserved for state elites. This has required a strategic and flexible approach, often making use of contacts with international non-state organisations which are able to act as intermediaries. According to Maung Maung, the most useful contacts for international lobbying have been trade unions and the international associations of political parties. Trade union contacts in Latin America made it possible to arrange a lobbying trip and meetings with government officials including the President of Brazil, himself a former trade union official. In other situations, including dealing with ASEAN governments, contact with international political party associations, such as Socialist International, Liberals International, and Congress of Asian Liberal and Democrats (CALD), have been important in arranging contact with politicians. Contacts with civil society organisations in other countries have also been important for lobbying foreign governments. The NCUB lobbying strategy has relied heavily on putting pressure on government officials through grassroots networks in the same country: 'for them to actually do something, they have to have the push coming from their own country and that's what we had to do' (interview 14, 2006).This strategy has concentrated on sectoral organisations, as these represent large voting blocs and can therefore put electoral pressure on politicians. To work through grassroots organisations such as trade unions, church groups, and student organisations, NCUB member organisations would be enlisted to partner up with similar organisations in the target country. Through these contacts,

particular politicians would be lobbied with the goal of getting the opposition movement's perspective considered by foreign affairs committees and government ministers (interview 14, 2006).

In a similar fashion, the Burmese opposition has gained access to international organisations in the UN system with the assistance of supportive GCSOs acting as intermediaries. This is especially the case in the International Labour Organisation (ILO), where the FTUB has achieved a unique level of access and recognition through close contact with the ITUC. Although the FTUB cannot be recognised as the official representative of Burmese labour, due to the veto of the SPDC regime, they have accreditation and speaking rights in the workers' caucus and secretariat through the ITUC. FTUB reports on forced labour and lack of freedom of association in Burma have been accepted by the ILO and have led to unprecedented sanctions being applied to the SPDC regime. In response to pressure from the ILO, the SPDC agreed to allow an ILO office to open in Rangoon to investigate complaints of forced labour. Although complainants have been harassed and even prosecuted, and forced labour continues to be commonly practised by regime forces, Burmese activists say that there has been a reduction compared to previous years, particularly on large projects under central government control. This is a significant victory for ordinary people in Burma, which opposition groups attribute to pressure exerted through the ILO, with the support of the international union movement (interview 14, 2006).

For the trade unions from Burma, such opportunities for international engagement are based on a long history of involvement with the international union movement and the Socialist International. The unions had been active in the ICFTU and involved in taking complaints to the ILO under freedom of association provisions since the establishment of the first military regime in Burma in 1962. Unions from Burma, especially the seafarer's union, had also been active in the Socialist International since the 1960s, acting as area representatives for Asia and engaging with their European counterparts. Burmese unions were therefore well known and respected in the international movement prior to the 1988 military crackdown in Burma and were well placed to take a leading role in coordinating international lobbying efforts against the military regime (interview 14, 2006).

The international lobbying activities of the Burmese opposition movement have been considerably broader than these trade union contacts, however, making use of all available avenues to influence international decision-making. Women's groups from Burma in particular have taken an active role in international lobbying. One of the BWU's first actions internationally was to make submissions to the United Nations Human Rights

Commission (UNHRC), following on from contacts made at the Beijing women's conference. This was seen as important so that general issues of human rights abuse would be linked to the particular abuses faced by women. Since the Women's League of Burma (WLB) was formed as an umbrella organisation in 1999, this group has taken on the role of coordinating these international lobbying activities. Representatives of ethnic women's organisations such as the Shan Women's Action Network and Karen Women's Organisation have played high profile lobbying roles, meeting state leaders and tabling reports on abuses against women by the SPDC regime (interviews 12, 13 and 25, 2006).

Gaining access to different UN agencies and fora has required a diversity of strategies to negotiate what NCUB leader Maung Maung described as "the most complicated bureaucratic mechanism in the whole world". For instance, access to the UNHRC was achieved through supportive NGOs who were able to submit reports and invite Burmese representatives to speak. In the first instance, this was done through the International Society of Friends, which had existing accreditation with the UNHRC. Later, through discussions with state representatives, the Burmese organisations got access to the commission through the Human Rights Foundation, an international advocacy organisation with UNHRC accreditation. Contacts with sympathetic states were also important for lobbying state representatives and gaining access to the UN General Assembly. Representatives of Norway and Sweden especially played the role of intermediaries, hosting functions and inviting other diplomats, to give Burmese representatives an opportunity to lobby states. Personal contacts were also important and could be maintained as individuals moved from one position to another. For example, when Eric Schwartz moved from being President Clinton's advisor at the UN to become head of Human Rights Watch he remained a key supporter of the Burmese movement's UN lobbying efforts. As these examples illustrate, the kinds of contacts and networks required for international lobbying are often complex and cannot be characterised by a simple linear movement in which civil society groups act as intermediaries to reach state representatives. Rather, a strategic lobbying approach requires organisations to maintain contacts in different areas and use them for leverage on each other as required (interview 14, 2006).

The Burmese representatives did not view international advocacy GCSOs such as human rights organisations as particularly important for international lobbying efforts. These organisations were seen as avoiding taking a political stand and as staying out of the highly politicised negotiations over the resolutions and decisions of international agencies. As such, international advocacy organisations were not seen as working within the political

movement. 'They give out their reports, and I think that is all they do. Which may be used by us or by politicians in saying things to government or to the media, but they are very careful to say that they are non-political' (interview 14, 2006). Sectoral GCSOs such as trade unions, by contrast, were seen as being more free to take a political stand on the issues.

The Philippines

As noted above, the international engagement of the Philippines opposition movement is based around the principle of people-to-people solidarity. As such, lobbying political elites is not a primary focus for any of the groups. However, there are times when the strategic goal of a campaign can be furthered by engaging in political lobbying, both domestically and internationally. When it is seen to be in the best interests of the base communities, opposition group leaders take a pragmatic and flexible approach to international lobbying.

The CPA has been involved in international lobbying since its establishment in 1984. Indigenous leaders had also been involved in international lobbying before that time, as part of campaigns against the Chico dams and Cellophil development projects. In 1985, the founding chairperson and secretary-general of CPA attended the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (WGIP). In the following years, the CPA continued to actively participate in the drafting and lobbying process for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, passed by the UN General Assembly in 2007. In addition to lobbying for action by the UN itself to protect indigenous rights, meetings of the WGIP and its successor, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), have provided a forum for groups like the CPA to directly lobby government representatives. As the secretary-general of CPA explains: 'we are there to expose how the Philippines government and international corporations are violating our rights and with concrete recommendations' (interview 3, 2008). To this end, the CPA has also, along with other opposition groups, been a frequent participant in the UN Human Rights Commission and its successor the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). As part of the coordinated campaign against extrajudicial killings and disappearances, the CPA challenged the right of the Philippines government to sit on the council and lobbied government representatives at the UNHRC to put pressure on the Philippines government (interview 3, 2008). In this campaign, the opposition groups focused especially on lobbying EU members, the EU itself, the USA, and Canada. Their efforts paid off when President Arroyo travelled to Europe:

it was not only the Amnesty International that raised this concern, even the EU ambassador to the Philippines and the EU members during her state visits last year were always confronting with these issues and concerns (interview 3, 2008).

As this quote suggests, opposition groups from the Philippines target both government and non-government groups in their international lobbying efforts. The secretary-general of BAYAN endorsed this approach, pointing out that while NGOs can be an important source of political support which helps to build a campaign, when foreign governments speak on an issue it tends to carry more weight due to the potential for an economic impact on the Philippines (interview 2, 2008).

The opposition movements covered in this study varied somewhat in their assessment of their capacity for engaging in international lobbying. While most groups felt that they were doing a good job in their efforts to engage with international organisations, some, such as the NUSP, felt that they lacked the resources and experience for international lobbying. The President of the NUSP said that for his organisation, 'the lack of training or know-how about lobbying at the UN level is something that we want to address' (interview 6, 2008). Reasons for this lack included the relatively high turnover of people involved in student politics, combined with the difficulty of retaining institutional memory given a lack of financial resources. The NUSP had no permanent offices or staff and so was largely dependent on the knowledge and experience of their executive members. One strategy the NUSP was following to address this problem was to build further links with overseas students' associations. The NUSP had met with student organisations from Germany and Belgium and was keen to learn from European student organisations about their experience with lobbying at the UN. The NUSP president also said that he would like to work more closely with other movements in the Philippines to learn from their experiences in international lobbying. Again the main barriers to this were finding the time and resources amid the daily pressures of political campaigns (interview 6, 2008).

The KMU has also had some difficulties with international lobbying and engagement with international organisations, but for rather different reasons. The ability of the KMU to engage with the UN International Labour Organisation (ILO) is limited by the fact that the ILO recognises the government-approved labour centre, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), as the official labour representative for the Philippines. Whereas the FTUB could manage the same situation with the support of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in the case of the Philippines, political disagreements have hampered engagement with the ITUC. These disagreements generally have their origins in cold war rivalries between the anti-communist labour movement under the ICFTU and unions which are seen as pro-communist, such as the KMU. The secretary-general of the

KMU characterised their disagreements with labour organisations such as the AFL-CIO in the USA in political terms:

> We know that the AFL-CIO ... that the CIA has some influence with the AFL-CIO. And since the KMU has been branded as a communist organisation, or a legal organisation of the communist party, we know that AFL-CIO is not friendly to the KMU (interview 5, 2008).

However, even these difficulties were able to be overcome, and the KMU reported successful engagement with both the ITUC and the ILO, despite not being an official member of either organisation.

Support for Organising and Political Activities

Burma

The perception that international advocacy organisations, and NGOs more generally, are 'apolitical' has filtered down to the membership level of the Burmese organisations. Activists at the grassroots level of several organisations expressed concerns that NGOs didn't understand or support the political objectives of their organisation. One member of the KYO was unsure if NGOs would support his organisation's political aim of dialogue with the regime: 'I don't know. Normally the NGO are not involved in political' (interview 27, 2006).

Members of the AKSYU expressed a related concern that some NGOs were just focused on their own 'main issue' rather than on the objectives of the groups they were working with or funding. 'Some NGOs do just their main issue. They don't care about our ethnic organisations, I mean the ethnic organisation's aim or goal for their future. But some NGO they just focus on their issue' (interview 9, 2006). For the AKSYU, an immediate priority for community organising was to promote Kachin culture and language among youth, many of whom did not speak their own language. But the organisation was frustrated that they had not been able to get any funding for these programs. Seeing that other organisations were receiving funds for environmental campaigns and reports, they had decided to pursue a similar project: 'So if we apply the environment issue proposal, maybe they agree and support us' (interview 9, 2006). This example reveals a downside to some of the success stories of environmental advocacy campaigns discussed above. While there are cases in which the priorities of international advocacy groups genuinely match with those of their local partners, it is worrying that the financial and political power to set these priorities seems to lie almost entirely with the advocacy GCSOs and not with local organisations.

Similarly, several organisations reported that it was easy to get funding for human rights training, but harder to get funding for riskier activities such as political organising. One union organiser said that his union was therefore afraid to apply for funds for organising projects in case the project was not successful (interview 15, 2006). This is highly problematic as there are many challenges involved in labour organising, and no organising project can be assured of success. Yet international donors tend to require project outcomes to be predictable and delivered as proposed.

In addition to the risk of projects failing, several organisations reported difficulties in explaining the requirements of underground political organising to donors. A spokesperson for the AASYC, who were involved in what they called 'political defiance' campaigns inside Burma, reported some difficulty in explaining their expenses to donors (interview 1, 2006). For example, campaigns involving gathering information about government activities often required bribes to be paid to low-level officials. If activists were arrested or being followed by the authorities, money could also be required for bribes or for expenses incurred in fleeing or lying low. The need for secrecy also had implications for even the most basic expenses, such as printing political leaflets. These could not be copied cheaply at a local printer. Instead, the organisation might have to buy a computer and printer in order to make their own flyers in secret. Even this equipment had to be bought and stored secretly, incurring extra expense and time delays.

The need for secrecy also had implications for communications and reporting on campaigns, and this had at times caused problems in the relationship between local organisations and donor or advocacy GCSOs. For instance, at one stage the AASYC organised political activities, including poster and graffiti campaigns, in urban areas inside Burma. They had documented their activities with photos and given copies to their funding organisations with a request that they not be published. However, one of the international organisations used the photos in a report without consulting the local organisation. The organisation from Burma was then worried that the photographs would be passed back to the SPDC by intelligence agents and used to track down and arrest organisation members. The local organisation reported that, with time and dialogue, these issues with the funding organisations were able to be resolved (interview 1, 2006). It is not surprising that such dialogue was required to reach a mutual understanding, especially given the very different environments in which the two organisations were operating. What is of concern is that it appears that it was the local organisation which was required to put in the effort to reach this understanding, and that until this happened, the negative consequences of any misunderstanding were felt solely by the local organisation. In such circumstances, where a

local organisation is involved in underground political work and is dependent on international donors for support, the local organisation has both the least power and the most to lose.

These kinds of concerns around security and confidentiality had persuaded some organisations to avoid dealing with GCSOs of any kind for sensitive or underground political organising. One trade union organiser with a local branch of the FTUB in Thailand reported a problem with an NGO sending out mass emails with open addresses (interview 15, 2006). This was at a time when Burmese military intelligence under General Khin Nyunt was targeting the email addresses and websites of opposition groups for electronic attacks including viruses and spamming. This problem was easily solved by advising the organisation to use Blank Copy for the email addresses, but this kind of incident did not help persuade local groups that international advocacy organisations can be trusted with sensitive information. A different international advocacy organisation had published the street address of an underground union office in an article on their website, forcing the organisation to move to another location. This kind of open communication might be considered a virtue by some GCSOs who favour transparency and open communication, but for underground organisations it is a serious security risk. The union organiser said that, in his experience, NGOs were very keen to promote a certain style of open networking which was not appropriate for organisations opposing a strong military regime. Where an NGO would want to organise a big meeting to canvass an issue, and would invite many groups to discuss and reach agreement, local organisations had more low-profile ways of reaching consensus: 'I think, we also want unity, but we have our own ways and own connections, which is not similar to the NGOs' (interview 15, 2006). To illustrate this point, the FTUB organiser gave an example of how local workers' organisations cooperated to deal with a large labour dispute in which 300 workers were locked out. The organisations met and talked to work out a common strategy and to decide who would take on what tasks. The groups were operating with a shared understanding of the local situation, especially the issues of security. For these organisations, it was common practice to arrange an informal meeting to discuss sensitive issues face-to-face and to avoid communicating by phone or email. The participant felt that the shared experience of working as part of an underground movement was an important part of what made it possible for the different Burmese organisations to work together and difficult to work with outside organisations. 'If there is an NGO also participating, I think it will not go like this ... Maybe will be leaked to the media, which organisation are involving, or on their website. Which is, I think, we are not happy' (interview 15, 2006).

The Philippines

Opposition organisations in the Philippines share the need of the Burmese groups for further material support for political campaigns and organising. The secretary-general of BAYAN identified support for political campaigns and organisers as the two priorities of the organisation in seeking further financial support. The organisation has been highly successful in combining community organising in local areas of the Philippines, with mass mobilisations in the capital, Manila (interview 2, 2008). Such mobilisations give focus and momentum to campaigns and help to pressure the government to make concessions, but they are expensive to organise: 'It's no joke trying to mobilise people, it's not that easy, if you're mobilising people coming from the provinces, if you're mobilising people coming from the urban poor' (interview 2, 2008) .

The Philippines opposition organisations have the human resources and political capacity to mobilise large numbers of people in support of political change, but often struggle to find the necessary financial and material resources. In effect, political mobilisation is made possible by the unpaid labour of thousands of community activists, many of whom work full-time for political organisations and are either unpaid or paid less than minimum wage rates (interview 2, 5, 2008). While the willingness of activists to contribute their unpaid time is a demonstration of their political commitment, it is often not sustainable. According to the general secretary of the KMU, many activists drop out of active involvement in the union because of the need to find paid employment: 'We have recruited a lot of activists, but we cannot retain them, because they have to find something to sustain the needs of their family' (interview 5, 2008). For the KMU, the prevailing poverty in the Philippines was a more serious barrier to their ability to recruit and retain organisers than any political repression, even during the martial law period (interview 5, 2008). The secretary-general of BAYAN identified support for political organisers as a key priority for further international support, suggesting that sympathetic organisations could 'adopt full-time organisers' from the Philippines by contributing to their living costs (interview 2, 2008).

Although the Philippines opposition organisations are in need of financial support, it is important to the organisations that any funding they receive is based on principled political support. The secretary-general echoed the similar sentiments expressed by spokespeople of several member organisations in rejecting the possibility of accepting funds from 'the imperialist funded organisations'. The objection to seeking or accepting funds from foreign foundations and government-funded bodies is as much pragmatic as principled, with the major objection being to the political conditions that are seen to be associated with such

grants. As the BAYAN secretary-general puts it, 'they tend to tie up your hands and you will be restricted in the things that you can and can't do'. The leaders of BAYAN, Anakbayan and Gabriela reported that their most significant source of overseas income was from Filipinos abroad, through chapters formed in other countries. These leaders also felt that expanding the involvement and contribution of Filipinos abroad was the best strategy for gaining international material support for the movements in the Philippines (interviews 1 and 4, 2008). For the NUSP and KMU, most support came from the domestic membership, although both organisations reported receiving limited amounts of support from overseas organisations. For instance, when leaders of the KMU are invited to attend international union conferences, their expenses may be subsidised by the host organisations (interview 5, 2008).

Of the groups covered in the interviews, the CPA seemed to have been most able to mobilise international financial support. The organisation was able to do this by adopting a strategic approach to engaging with GCSOs, without compromising their own political principles. For instance, through contacts with First Nations groups in the USA, the CPA was able to apply for grant funding from the Tides Foundation to assist with the annual Cordillera Day celebrations. The CPA had also cooperated with advocacy GCSOs concerned with the environment and indigenous people's rights and had successfully applied for funding to produce reports and attend conferences. The CPA takes a strategic approach in deciding on which issues and at what level of militancy to pitch a request for principled support. The CPA is aware that for most philanthropic and advocacy GCSOs, a request for support couched in the language of militant anti-imperialism is likely to 'just go directly to their trash can' (interview 3, 2008). Likewise, international organisations which do provide political support for the anti-imperialist stance of the CPA, such as fellow members of the ILPS, are often unable to offer significant financial support as 'they have their own struggles in their home countries'. The solution for the CPA is to find ways to work with more conservative philanthropic and advocacy GCSOs in ways that are consistent with at least some of the CPA's goals and principles, without violating any others:

> These NGOs are not anti-imperialist, but we can work with them based on broad indigenous issues or human rights. That's still principled, that's still on the level of respecting our culture… the challenge to us is how to package our request and our proposals, so that it will not be a highly political one, but it should be anticipated and calculated that it also works within the bounds of indigenous peoples' rights advocacy. (interview 3, 2008)

The experiences of the opposition organisations from the Philippines covered in this

study support two related conclusions. First, that the political space created by GCSOs is not neutral in the opportunities it provides for international support, but rather acts to enable some forms of political action. Second, that, notwithstanding the political constraints operating in and through global civil society, CBOs are able to strategically mobilise resources through international relationships in ways that are supportive of their domestic and international political agency.

Conclusion

In working to raise international awareness, organisations from Burma have focused on challenging the international legitimacy of the regime as well as on international aspects of their issue-specific campaigns, such as with respect to foreign investment. In doing so, local groups have formed relationships with GCSOs, including advocacy and sectoral organisations. These relationships have been generally positive and beneficial to the local groups, so long as efforts are made by GCSOs to ensure that the local groups retain control of their campaigns. However, international attention on political issues can be transient and fickle and local groups are careful not to rely too heavily on GCSOs for the success of their political campaigns.

Another purpose of raising international awareness is to build international networks of mutual learning and support between non-state organisations. These networking opportunities are important to local groups, who often organise their local coalitions in such a way that even small local groups can be connected to international networks. The relationships with international sectoral and advocacy GCSOs in such networks have been most successful where the GCSO has taken a proactive approach to initiating and maintaining contact; where the GCSO has taken a clear and principled stand in support of the local partner; and where there is a genuine commitment to learning about the culture and circumstances of the local groups.

Organisations from Burma see it as an important part of their role to influence international decision-making by states and international organisations, encouraging them to put pressure on the SPDC regime and to push for a political solution to current conflicts. To this end, the Burmese organisations have adopted a strategic and flexible approach, working through contacts with GCSOs and grassroots networks, as well as with sympathetic states, to gain access to international decision-makers and decision-making fora. Interestingly, some advocacy GCSOs, such as international human rights groups, were not seen by the Burmese organisations as particularly useful in this regard, because such organisations tend to stay independent from active political lobbying. Rather, it was sectoral GCSOs, such as trade unions, which were seen as the most useful contacts for

international lobbying, due to their willingness to take a political stand on the issues and to get involved in political negotiations.

In addition to assisting with international awareness-raising and lobbying, some GCSOs, including philanthropic, service, and advocacy organisations, were involved in supporting local political activities and organising. All of the organisations expressed a need and appreciation for international support for these activities. However, it was in this area of support for the political activities of local organisations that the most problems arose. There was a perception at the grassroots level of many organisations that GCSOs did not support the political goals of the local organisations and were only concerned for their own issues and priorities. This perception is supported in part by the comments of local organisation leaders, who reported that it was easier to get support for issues prioritised by GCSOs, such as human rights training and environmental campaigns, and harder to get support for riskier activities such as political organising. Where GCSOs did support political activities, there were further difficulties due to differences in styles of communication and organising. While these differences are to be expected and are not in themselves a problem, it was often the local organisations which were required to make the effort to overcome misunderstanding and to deal with the consequences.

The case studies considered in this chapter demonstrate the potential benefits of non-state engagement for political change. There are various ways in which GCSOs can play a constructive role in international efforts to effect change in repressive regimes. These include supporting locally-based organisations in their efforts to raise international awareness, gaining access to international lobbying, and pursuing local political activities and organising. However, there is also the potential for problems in the relationship between local and international non-state organisations. These problems were avoided best by GCSOs which maintained a principled commitment to addressing the self-identified needs of local organisations within an equal relationship of mutual learning.

Conclusion

'People power' – defined here in the lexicon of *everyday politics* – is the exercise of political agency by non-elite actors who are shut out of the corridors of power, and who can neither buy access and influence through wealth nor realise their political aspirations through the ballot box.

Everyday politics is present everywhere, in every society, but is resistant to many traditional research methods that are geared more towards tracing and explaining the changing dynamics of formal politics and towards understanding the strategies, motivations, and effective influence of elite actors. Everyday politics encompasses the exercise of non-elite agency in rich countries and poor, democratic and authoritarian, regardless of cultural, religious, and historical differences.

Despite the universality of everyday politics, the practices of everyday political actors vary greatly depending on the nature of their political environments. There are particularly large variations between societies where democratic freedoms are relatively more entrenched and are effectively protected through widely-accepted legal sanctions and limits on state power, and those where the state *is* the enemy of the people; where engaging in overt acts of political resistance necessarily entails risks to actors' physical security, their livelihoods, and the welfare of their communities. In extreme environments of oppression, it might reasonably be expected that political resistance will most of the time be resolutely suppressed and muted, especially when severe asymmetries of material power exist between a state regime and local opposition groups.

Everyday resistance to political oppression, while arguably a counter-intuitive response when people are faced with state violence and intimidation, is more often the rule than the exception. Rather than reluctantly consenting to state authority – or accepting a regime's dominance as 'natural' or 'inevitable' – non-elite actors in political systems characterised by systemic coercion and oppression instead often exhibit a multiplicity of forms of everyday political resistance – 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985) – to challenge the legitimacy and authority of their rulers. As the foregoing chapters have shown, such acts of everyday political resistance are more often covert, indirect, and 'hidden' from the glare surrounding the machinations of formal politics, although the cumulative effects of everyday political actions have the potential to translate into open public campaigns and mass protests that occasionally achieve sweeping political transformation. Understanding the everyday politics of resistance therefore involves studying how non-elite actors develop strategies of political

contestation in pursuit of new political goals, and how the social impact of their actions can become magnified if the legitimacy of a regime's right to rule is effectively undermined.

All Politics is Local?

This thesis has shown how everyday politics operates in subordinate conditions of political oppression in two country cases from Asia: Burma and the Philippines. In demonstrating this, I have challenged the ontological assumption common to much global civil society scholarship that depicts domestic social activism as fitting neatly into the category of *civil society*, defined as non-state, non-profit, and non-violent. These cases have illustrated the analytical limitations of this conventional definition, with community-based organisations in Burma and the Philippines taking a more flexible approach to the use of violent strategies to pursue political aims (and for more immediate purposes of community survival).

Furthermore, this study has also challenged the notion that global civil society actors are an essential source of inspiration, resources, and legitimacy for social actors within developing countries. However, this is not to claim – following Tip O'Neil (1995) – that 'all politics is local'. Instead, it is to put forward the argument that all politics has two dimensions, formal and informal, elite and non-elite. Political action is thus somewhat like an iceberg, with the visible tip consisting of a combination of formal and elite politics, and the submerged 'invisible' mass of the iceberg consisting of informal and non-elite *everyday politics*.

Everyday politics is therefore not by definition *local* politics. It can be *local* and *national*, or just as easily *global* in scale. The key conceptual twist here is not necessarily the realm of political action that everyday actors operate in (local, national, or global), but rather: (1) the category into which their political activities generally fall (informal rather than formal); and (2) their rank position in a hierarchical political order (non-elite rather than elite).

The political contestation of regime legitimacy (*how* and *why* a government governs, rather than *who* is governing and being governed) comprises an essential component of the everyday politics of resistance. In addressing the central line of enquiry this study has sought to investigate – how non-elite actors contest political oppression – a large part of the answer that has been highlighted by these two cases is fairly straightforward: everyday actors use whatever covert (and where possible overt) means are available to repeatedly attack the bases of regime legitimacy, whether these are centred on religion, national identity, material resources, or political rhetoric.

The means used by these everyday actors may range from documenting human rights abuses to organising mass protests. They may include the provision of basic educational

needs as well as community organising to establish local decision-making and planning processes and to provide collective community benefits (substituting for public goods that are not provided by the state).

Furthermore, such means may encompass both violent and non-violent forms of resistance. These may include non-compliance with state directives (such as agricultural planning demands). They may also include violence, either in the form of *offensive* resistance through military battles or *passive* armed resistance designed to avoid open confrontation through acting as a 'last line of defense' and an 'early-warning system' for village communities. What makes these strategies of political resistance stand out in terms of existing accounts of political legitimacy is that they contribute to the construction of *situational legitimacy*, characterised by the emergence of socially-embedded local norms that, by definition, serve to hollow out the legitimacy claims of the state.

Empirical Findings

Why do people mobilise through social organisations to challenge the legitimacy of states? As Chapter 2 has demonstrated, community-based organisations attract legitimacy from their 'base' communities through the construction of reciprocal relationships that are developed over time in adverse political conditions and through shared experiences of oppression. People therefore mobilise through social organisations to resist state oppression, to gain assistance to meet community needs such as education, physical security, and to form positive channels of communication that afford both base communities and activist organisations greater scope to evade state intimidation and coercion.

Through community-based organisations, non-elite actors can forge strategies to challenge state legitimacy that are founded upon consensual legitimacy rather than legitimacy by proclamation. This is an important distinction both in the case of an authoritarian regime such as the Burmese state, and in a formally-democratic state such as the Philippines, where opposition groups in both cases seek to achieve political transformation based on popular consent rather than a mere changing-of-the-guard in the form of a new government.

As Chapter 3 has shown, regimes in both Burma and the Philippines are viewed as lacking popular consent in large part because of the failure of the state to provide basic public goods, such as competent economic management that delivers economic opportunities for the broader population, access to education, and physical security for individuals or the community. As a consequence, the forms of consensual legitimacy that are fostered through the everyday politics of mobilising resistance via community-based

organisations form not just a means of contesting state legitimacy, but also a direct expression of an alternative conception of legitimacy based upon consent. For this reason, it is common for opposition groups to strike a deliberate contrast between the qualities of their own relations with their base communities and the failures of the state.

Why do some groups choose non-violence while others take up armed struggle? In contrast to much of the existing literature on social activism (either within or beyond state borders), and especially the rapidly growing International Relations literature on global civil society actors, Chapter 4 has demonstrated that a clear division between political violence and social activism can sometimes be an artificial normative construct rather than an empirical analysis grounded in everyday practices. In this respect, the legitimacy of political violence depends less on whether an individual is a member of an armed or a non-armed group and more on the identified needs of the community, principled beliefs, and strategic choices in complex situations. What may often matter more than the tactics (violent or non-violent) that a particular group employs is whether a group has demonstrated a clear commitment to the collective interests of the community in order to generate bonds of consensual legitimacy and cooperation between opposition groups and their base communities.

Why do local organisations seek to engage with international state and non-state organisations? As Chapter 5 illustrates, external actors such as other states, intergovernmental organisations like the United Nations, and global civil society organisations can act as a form of 'megaphone diplomacy' to increase public awareness about political oppression and state violence in a society, or to magnify support for an issue-specific campaign that can challenge the international legitimacy of a regime. They can also provide influential sources of ideational and material resources that can prove valuable for facilitating learning processes among community-based organisations, thus enhancing these organisations' capacity to contest regime legitimacy, as well as strengthening their roots in their base communities.

However, in interacting with these international organisations, community-based organisations sometimes struggle to translate their own immediate circumstances, their communities' needs, and their political goals into the discourse commonly used by global civil society actors. Similarly, to be meaningful at the local level, the sources of ideational support offered by international actors must first be able to be situated within existing social relations and everyday norms. Support from global civil society actors has therefore been most valuable and effective for community-based organisations in Burma and the Philippines, as Chapter 6 illustrates, when international actors have maintained regular

contact with local groups, and where GCSOs have exhibited a genuine commitment to understanding the culture and needs of local groups on their own terms, rather than imposing an international 'template' for cooperation and political action.

Under what conditions are local groups influenced by international norms? As both Chapters 5 and 6 have shown, community-based organisations are more likely to be influenced by international norms when they resonate with existing social relations in the local context. This resonance can occur at multiple levels, from full value-based concurrence to the more strategic recognition that an international norm represents a means to gain international support and assistance for local political goals. In the Burmese case, for example, international human rights training and norms of documenting abuses proved useful for the purposes of promoting international awareness about the egregious acts of violence perpetrated by the state against the local population on an everyday basis.

However, international norms are far less likely to resonate or to be easily translated into local groups' political strategies when they cut across the immediate needs and everyday survival mechanisms of base communities and their associated activist organisations. This is especially the case when the adoption of international norms, however commonly they may be practised in other contexts, places the safety of local communities in jeopardy.

Broader Lessons

Beyond the more specific findings from these two country case studies, with respect to why non-elite actors resist state oppression; why they use or do not use armed force; why and when they seek international support; and when international norms have an influence on domestic political struggles; the research illustrates wider points that are significant for understanding the politics of normative change and political resistance on a broader canvas. This thesis suggests three significant broader lessons from the cases of everyday political resistance in Burma and the Philippines.

Legacy issues

First, and perhaps most obviously, the legacies of the past often continue to cast a long shadow over contemporary forms of political resistance and state power in particular societies. In Burma, the military regime has continued practices of oppression and intimidation inherited from the country's former colonial rulers. On the other hand, opposition groups' everyday strategies and political practices are also informed by earlier periods of struggle, such as the 1988 mass democracy protests, and both their judgements about the lack of regime legitimacy and their goals for political transformation are informed by memories of the failings of previous forms of government.

Structural patterns

Second, the structural pattern of relations between a state and the international community shapes the definition and articulation of opposition groups' ambitions for political change. In the Burmese case, the regime's isolation from the international community has fostered a comparatively greater willingness on the part of Burmese opposition groups to seek and accept international assistance for their goals, with the common thread between the political ambitions articulated by different groups being a change in the regime towards something approximating a liberal state. In contrast, the structural conditions of economic dependence between the Philippines and the international financial institutions (until fairly recently the IMF, and now especially the World Bank) have prompted Filipino opposition groups to view the contemporary architecture of global economic governance as a straitjacket on the country's policy-making autonomy, which has hampered its ability to foster broad-based economic growth, increased living standards, and greater employment opportunities. Moreover, the military alliance between the United States and the Philippines government is seen as a key source of regime illegitimacy by opposition movements, especially since the US-led Global War on Terror has been adopted as a smokescreen for the government to gain increased military aid and resources from the US. This US assistance has been partly directed towards cracking down on the leaders and key activists within democratic opposition groups. As a consequence of these patterns of economic and military dependence between the Philippines regime and international actors, Filipino opposition organisations are more readily opposed to a transition to a fully-functioning *liberal* democratic state with a market-based economy, and have articulated different goals oriented towards economic independence and greater state intervention in the economy to increase development, alleviate poverty, and enhance employment opportunities.

Consensual legitimacy

The third main broader lesson emerging from this research is the importance of reincorporating consent-based theories of legitimacy within the study of political change, political legitimacy, and democratisation. While the broad thrust of the existing literature in these fields in recent years has been focused on the importance of *procedural* legitimacy – not least in studying questions of democratic transition, electoral design, accountability, and 'good governance' – the rule of law and efficient procedures for electing and dismissing a government are not sufficient in and of themselves for social legitimacy. Instead, broad-based social legitimacy for political institutions and a particular form and style of government can only be conferred through popular consent. Rather than consent being

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construed narrowly in terms of individual or group definitions of self-interest (cf. Cabrera 2010, 43), consensual power can constitute a potent and durable source of political legitimation.

Implications for Future Research

The argument and findings in this thesis have important implications for recent debates over the legitimacy of nonconventional forms of social activism – including the use of violence for political ends – and for the study of the role of non-state actors in Political Science and International Relations more broadly. Understanding the informal and non-elite dimension of political activism can also contribute to the wider literature on democratisation, by helping to incorporate a greater range of political actors and forms of political action without 'black boxing' non-elite politics as 'social forces', 'societal pressures', 'interest groups', or 'sectoral interests', and without relying on exogenous political dynamics (such as the 'third-wave' democratisations after the end of the Cold War) as the main explanatory variables. Of particular importance here is the need for more studies of political activism and global civil society actors to avoid inadvertently downgrading the everyday politics of non-elites as marginal in comparison with the more visible forms of political influence exercised by higher-profile social actors (including elite social actors, such as many GCSOs). Such studies would also help to ensure that research does not simply disregard the political dynamics that occur outside the realm of formal politics and at the sub-state level in developing countries.

More broadly, by paying greater attention to the everyday sources of political change and normative contestation, it becomes possible to carry out a more comprehensive analysis of how big political and policy changes can sometimes originate in 'small' actions, including the everyday survival strategies used by community-based organisations who lack access to the formal sources of wealth and power in a society. The emerging literature on 'informal institutions' (Helmke and Levitsky 2004), 'everyday politics' (Hobson and Seabrooke 2007), and 'everyday life' (Langley 2009) has already paved the way for more studies of the non-elite sources of big processes of political change, across both developed industrial economies and developing economies, as well as democratic and non-democratic political regimes. This thesis suggests that a great deal more can be gained from linking studies of the everyday politics of resistance to more conventional studies of processes of democratisation, economic development, and international assistance in oppressive regimes.

A final avenue for future research suggested by this study is to explore in greater detail the impact of social learning processes in political mobilisation. Learning processes at the

local and international level can potentially be important drivers of change in expectations, habitual practice, and conceptual framing, especially when learning interacts with local political norms to enhance existing repertoires of political resistance. In particular, the existing broad literatures on political activism in democratic states, transnational social movements and political change, and democracy activism in non-democratic states could potentially benefit from incorporating a greater focus on the learning dimension of community organising, political mobilisation, and regime opposition.

In the cases of Burma and the Philippines, non-state political opposition movements are still a work in progress, and in neither case have community-based organisations yet achieved their substantive goals of political transformation (in Burma, political change towards a more liberal state, and in the Philippines, political change towards a more socialist and economically-independent state). The everyday politics of political resistance in Burma and the Philippines has instead concentrated on gradually challenging the sources of regime legitimacy, while simultaneously developing more consensual forms of political legitimation between activist organisations and their base communities. In both cases, the state has failed to provide a range of basic public goods, including access to education, economic opportunities, and physical security, while in the case of Burma in particular the state is blamed for generating a systemic climate of fear among the population.

In this thesis I have advanced the argument that non-elite opposition groups contest state legitimacy through everyday political actions that take place outside the realm of formal elite politics, but which are nonetheless powerful and significant forms of political resistance in themselves. In doing so, non-elite actors help to create locally situated norms of political legitimacy. State authority, even in authoritarian and oppressive democratic regimes, is neither absolute nor immune from challenges by everyday actors, who make use of 'weapons of the weak' to pursue their political, economic, and social goals.

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Burmese author names are cited in full (e.g., Aung Saw Oo), unless the referenced publication has adopted the Western style (e.g., Min, Win), in which case this is followed for consistency. Corporate author names are also cited in full (e.g., Albert Einstein Institution), unless the abbreviated form is more commonly used (e.g., BBC). Fieldwork interviews are listed separately in Appendix A.

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Appendix A: Interview Participants

(01) Spokesperson, All Arakan Student and Youth Congress (AASYC), October 27, 2006
(02) Spokesperson, All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), October 22
(03) member 1, ABSDF, October 21
(03) member 1, ABSDF, October 21
(04) member 2, ABSDF, October 19
(05) member 3, ABSDF, October 22
(06) member 4, ABSDF, October 22
(07) member 5, ABSDF, October 19
(08) Spokesperson, ABSDF, October 3
(09) All Kachin Student and Youth Union (AKSYU), October 17
(10) Spokesperson, Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), October 30
(11) Spokesperson, Arakan Youth Network Group (AYNG), October 29
(12) Spokesperson, Burmese Women's Union (BWU), October 10
(13) members, BWU, October 27
(14) Spokesperson, Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB), November 6
(15) Organiser, FTUB, October 31
(16) Spokesperson, Federation of Trade Unions of Kawthoolei (FTUK), October 31
(17) Spokesperson, Joint Action Committee (JAC), November 1
(18) Spokesperson, Karen Education Workers' Union (KEWU), November 2
(19) member 1, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), October 26
(20) member 2, KNLA, October 26
(21) Spokesperson, Karen National Union (KNU), October 7
(22) Spokesperson, Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT), October 12
(23) Interns, KWAT, October 13
(24) Spokesperson, Karen Student Network Group (KSNG), October 30

(25) Spokesperson, Karen Women's Organisation (KWO), October 20
(26) Members, KWO, October 20
(27) member 1, Karen Youth Organisation (KYO), October 26
(28) member 2, KYO, October 26
(29) Spokesperson, Mon Unity League (MUL), November 14
(30) Spokesperson, Mon Women's Organisation (MWO), November 9
(31) member, MWO, November 10
(32) Spokesperson, Mon Youth Progressive Organisation (MYPO), November 9
(33) Spokesperson, New Mon State Party (NMSP), November 9
(34) Spokesperson, Palung State Liberation Front (PSLF), October 16
(35) Spokesperson, Zomi Student and Youth Congress (ZSYC), October 27

Table 1: Participants in the study – Organisations from Burma

(01) Spokesperson, Anakbayan, April 2008
(02) Spokesperson, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (New Patriotic Alliance) – (BAYAN), April 2008
(03) Spokesperson, Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA), April 2008
(04) Spokesperson, General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action (GABRIELA), April 2008
(05) Spokesperson, Kilusang Mayo Uno (May First Movement) – (KMU), April 2008
(06) Spokesperson, National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), April 2008

Table 2: Participants in the study – Organisations from the Philippines

Appendix B: Interview Guide

The following questions were used to guide interviews in both cases. Wording and order of questions varied depending on the interview.

Goals

1. What are the primary goals of your organisation?
2. What first got you involved in the movement?
3. What keeps you involved? What's most important to you?
4. How is your community (eg Karen) organised to be part of your group?
5. (How do you encourage participation of your community/membership? How are they involved?)
6. What issues or problems are most important at the moment for the situation of the community?
7. Are you involved in working with people from outside your community? (or do you know someone who does?)
8. Do outsiders understand the situation of your people? Do they understand what you want, what you are trying to do?
9. What about international or overseas groups? NGOs or other international organisations? Do you work with them?
10. Do these international groups understand the situation and what you are trying to do?
11. Do they talk about it in the same way? Do you have to change the way you explain yourself when talking to outsiders or a foreign NGO?
12. What is your view of the SPDC regime/government? Why?
13. What would you like to see change? (including form of the state: constitutional structure, processes)

Actions

1. What are the most important activities of your group?
2. What kinds of things does your group do in your member communities?
3. Have you been involved in these, what is your role?
4. Are any of these activities funded by or in partnership with other organisations? (international/local NGO, government organisations)
5. How would you describe your relationship with these organisations?

6. Are you able to communicate easily, do they understand what you are doing and trying to achieve?

7. Are there activities you don't have support for? Why not?

8. What interaction, if any, do you have with state authorities in Burma? (local, central, different branches)

9. Have you taken action in opposition to state policies or the regime? (including any aspect of campaigning, protest, resistance, lobbying, providing information and support for such, etc)

10. Have your actions been supported by other groups? (international/local NGO, government organisations)

11. How would you describe your relationship?

12. Are there activities you don't have support for? Why not?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent are you able to meet the needs of your community?

2. What activities have been most successful? Which haven't been? How do you judge?

3. Have you been able to affect state policies? The status of the regime?

4. What would be necessary to have more effect?

5. Have you been able to work effectively with other local groups? With international, overseas groups?