

# Indigeneity in the Cordillera (Philippines)

*On the friction between localities and universalities*



# **Indigeneity in the Cordillera (Philippines)**

*On the friction between localities and universalities*



## **Bachelor thesis Cultural Anthropology**

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*“What is the most precious thing to man? Life! If life is threatened, what ought a man do? Fight! This he must do, otherwise he is dishonored. That will be worse than death. If we do not fight and the dams push through, we die anyway. If we fight, we die honorably.”*

- Macliim Dulag

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## **Introduction: constructing indigeneity**

In this era of neoliberal globalization, cultural minorities increasingly define themselves as 'indigenous peoples'. In 1994, the indigenous Zapatistas rose against the Mexican government in their struggle for self-determination. Ten years later, the indigenous Adivasi movement in Kerala, India, protested against land grabbing and the exploitation of their natural resources. In 2007, the UN launched their internationally acknowledged 'Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (UNDRIP) which further reinforced indigenous movements. In 2012 the movement 'Idle No More' was founded in which several Canadian indigenous peoples (IPs) united to stop the construction of pipelines in the waterways that pass through their lands. These are just a few examples out of numerous movements based on indigenous identity, that have been founded in all different parts of the world, since the 1990s. What are these movements fighting for?

To understand the rise of indigenous movements, we have to look at the socio-economic context. Since the 1980s there has been a tendency toward neoliberalism which was reinforced by the implementation of the Washington Consensus in 1989. In the past decades third world countries have been pushed by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and WTO to implement neoliberal policies in the name of economic development. These policies include deregulation of the state market, privatization, austerity policies in times of crisis and free trade. Neoliberalism goes hand in hand with corporate globalization which gives multinational corporations the opportunity to extract resources in the territories of indigenous peoples. Mining, logging and the construction of dams are among the projects that threaten the environment of indigenous peoples, who tend to live in areas that are rich in natural resources. Since most indigenous peoples are peasants and therefore strongly rely on the natural environment to make their living, their livelihoods are directly threatened by the extractive industries and energy projects that are often destructive for the environment.

All over the world indigenous peoples have been successful in using their common indigenous identity as a tool to mobilize against these threats that do not only threaten their livelihood but also their culture, as most indigenous people's cultures are intertwined with the environment. Furthermore, increased interconnectedness, a consequence of globalization, has given rise to a transnational discourse of indigeneity (Ghosh 2006) which is embodied in organizations such as the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and international alliances between indigenous peoples that connect different movements and organizations. These organizations and networks of alliances are shaped by local struggles and but also shape these local struggles, in an interesting interplay in which different identities and discourses work on different levels of organization.

The rise of 'indigeneity' as a form of cultural politics is part of a broader socio-political development: the changing of the way power is exercised. Neoliberalism does not only shape the (global) economy, the market ideology also has cultural and political consequences and even determines the way we think. In our globalized world, the nation-state can less and less be seen as an absolutist power unit. Michel Foucault's concept of *governmentality* (1991) expresses this idea. The power of the state erodes and new forms of power arise, such as the increased salience of corporate power in the context of global neoliberalism. Governmentality is a modern 'neoliberal' form of exercising power, in which life and politics are more interlinked than ever as processes of subjectivation play a major role in the (re)construction of these power relations. Indigenous movements instrumentalize 'indigeneity' in their attempt to transform power relations. This instrumentalization is accompanied by new forms of identity, and new ideas about (indigenous) sovereignty and (cultural) citizenship that challenge and undermine the state as the concept of governmentality does away with the assumption of sovereignty based on national citizenship (Lemke 2001: 203). The new sovereignty is decentralized and fragmented. Indigenous movements use the reconfiguration of the concepts 'citizen', 'sovereignty' and 'nation' as tools to create political space. This is why the concept indigeneity is inextricably linked to the concepts of governmentality, citizenship and sovereignty.

Charles Hale, an anthropologist who researched indigenous movements in Latin America, calls for "*sharpened empirical attention to the specific local contexts and consequences of the new cultural politics*" (2006: 39). How does indigeneity work 'on the ground'? Is it grassroots or imposed top-down? How does indigeneity exactly fit in neoliberal governmentality? How is indigenous identity constructed and when does it become operational? Anthropological fieldwork could help us in gaining a deeper understanding of the workings of indigeneity and its power to alter power relations. I conducted research in the Cordillera region in the north of the Philippines among the Igorots<sup>1</sup> to gain insight in the interaction between different levels and spaces in which indigeneity is constructed, the role of discourses and power relations in this construction process and the 'power of indigeneity' in grassroots struggles of indigenous peoples. My case-study is the opposition to the numerous renewable energy projects that are being implemented in the region, and particularly a windmill park that was supposed to be constructed on a mountain ridge between the municipalities of Besao and Sagada in Mountain Province and which was successfully opposed by the indigenous people living there.

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<sup>1</sup> I chose to use the term 'Igorots' instead of 'Cordillerans' because despite CPA's justified claim that the former term carries negative racist connotations because of its use by the Spanish *conquistadores* in the past, the term 'Igorots' and not the term 'Cordillerans' was used by most of my informants. I chose to use the emic term.



The social relevance of my research is connected to this theoretical research aim. I want to create a deeper understanding of how power relations, generated through subjectivation processes, work, and I especially want to investigate in which ways these power relations could be altered to accomplish social change. Our neoliberal system and its governmentality marginalizes particular groups in society. It is one of the tasks of social scientists to deconstruct those power relations and support marginalized peoples in their struggle to open up spaces for social contestation.

In this thesis, I argue that indigeneity is constructed on the friction<sup>2</sup> between localities and universalities. Power relations and discourses play a major role in the way indigeneity is shaped. In the first chapter I discuss the central theories and concepts that I use: neoliberal governmentality, sovereignty, biopolitics, discourse and subjectivation. In the methodology part, I discuss the relation between science and society and the collaborative research, a type of 'engaged anthropology', that I chose to conduct. Thereafter, in the second chapter I discuss the context of my research: an overview of the indigenous tribes living in the Cordillera, the historical context of the Cordillera, the political situation, the entrance of corporate energy projects, the trade of carbon credits, indigenous rights in the Philippines and the birth of the indigenous movement in the Cordillera. I will give a brief history of the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) and explain the different levels on which they work. In this chapter, I also introduce my case-study: the opposition to the construction of a windmill park in Mountain Province.

In the third chapter which I named 'Narratives of Power', I give an overview of the power relations in the municipalities of Sagada and Besao, based on narratives told by the communities. These narratives help to define the borders, supposed nature and shared desires of a community but also tell us about local diversities and reveal conflicting interest and alliances within regional, national and international networks. These narratives play a major role in processes of identity formation and reveal power relations between the Igorots and the corporations that implement renewable energy projects in the region. In chapter 4, 'The Mobilization of Networks in Micro-politics', I discuss the power of discourses in the opposition to the wind farm. With help of empirical examples, I explain which discourses shape indigenous identity and mobilize the opposition. These discourses and identities differ on different 'levels of struggle'. In the fifth chapter, 'Indigeneity, on the Friction between Localities and Universalities', I explain how a common political identity is constructed, how this identity is shaped by international indigeneity discourses, how this identity serves as a foundation for the indigenous movement in the Cordillera and how it relates to localities and universalities. In the discussion, I will explore whether indigeneity is able to create hopeful spaces for

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<sup>2</sup> Term adopted from Anna Tsing's ethnography 'Friction' (2005).

altering the neoliberal system we live in, or if these cultural politics are an integral part of the neoliberal system, in which the indigenous peoples are slowly incorporated through the institutionalization of indigeneity. In the conclusion I give a short summary of my findings in relation to the concepts of governmentality, biopolitics and friction, on which I build my argument.

## **CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMES**

*"The relations between power and knowledge are never complete. Forms of knowledge exist that are subordinate or subjugated to dominant understandings and knowledge practices – those of women, the colonized, the insane, subordinate groups – and they exist on the margins, partially hidden from view, but still active, forming the basis for individual agency and perhaps for group resistance".*

(Moore & Sanders 2012: 13)

This thesis looks into the way indigeneity is instrumentalized by social movements to open up spaces for social contestation, and alter power relations. In the context of neoliberalism, the power of the state and other political actors is increasingly challenged by political units that organize themselves against the state and seek new forms of *governmentality* to accomplish this. The instrumentalization of indigeneity is one of those new forms that is used by cultural groups in their attempt to change the existing power structures. To understand these new movements, we have to think beyond the idea of the state as the possessor of power and its citizens as objects. The French philosopher and social theorist Foucault (1926-1984) has been the leading figure in thinking about new concepts to understand power. He argues that power is not something one could possess, it is exercised in interaction between different actors and therefore we should think of power relations, rather than power. In this chapter, I discuss the foucauldian concepts and theories related to the workings of power relations and connect these to neoliberalism and the rise of cultural politics.

### **Neoliberal governmentality**

*"As a new mode of political optimization, neoliberalism – with a small n – is reconfiguring relationships between governing and the governed, power and knowledge, and sovereignty and territoriality."* (Ong 2006: 3)

The ways in which power relations work, have changed over time. Foucault calls the modern form of exercising power we experience today '*governmentality*'.

*"A governmentality is a particular mentality, a particular manner of governing, that is actualized in habits, perceptions, and subjectivity."* (Read 2009: 34)

Lemke and Read both emphasize that governmentality is a modern 'neoliberal' form of governing in which subjectivation through 'techniques of the self' plays an important role in the (re)production of power relations. The 'status quo' is reconstructed through a 'government of truth' that extends politics to every aspect of the social lives of individuals and presents the status quo as if it were natural (Lemke 2002; Read 2009).

Read stresses that "any criticism of neoliberalism as governmentality must not focus on its errors, on its myopic conception of social existence, but on its particular production of truth." (Read 2009: 34). The production of truth through 'subjectivation processes', in which discourses and the formation of identities play a major role, is essential in the construction of power relations. Governmentality, as a neoliberal mode of governing, closely links 'life' and 'politics' as it subjectivates individuals to a government of truth.

### **Biopolitics: sovereignty and subjectivation**

At the heart of governmentality lies a new form of politics which Foucault calls 'biopolitics'<sup>3</sup>. This concept encourages social scientists to think about sovereignty in a new way. In biopolitics, power relations are (re)constructed through the body and behaviour of the people. People are made subjects in subjectivation processes which makes all aspects of their life, political. Foucault uses the concept biopolitics as a perspective to think about new forms of governmentality whereby politics and life could not be seen as two separate entities, for they are co-constructive elements in a dialectic relationship:

*"Life is not only the object of politics and external to political decision-making, it affects the core of politics – the political subject. Biopolitics is not the expression of a sovereign will, but aims at the administration and regulation of life processes on the level of populations. It focuses on living beings rather than on legal subjects – or, to be more precise, it deals with legal subjects that are at the same time living beings."* (Lemke 2010: 428).

Foucault sees biopolitics as an important instrument for exercising power (Foucault 1980 & 2003: 239–264) that is "closely linked to the emergence of liberal forms of government" (Lemke 2010: 430). Neoliberalism is a "specific art of governing human beings" (Lemke 2010: 430) in which individuals' lives and their biological features or 'bodies' are subjectivated to discourses of 'knowledge of life' or 'regimes of truth' (Lemke 2010: 433) through which the behaviour of a population is regulated. These populations are also characterized by a level of autonomy: the possibility of political intervention and the transformation of 'the knowledge of life' discourse (Lemke 2010: 31). Biopolitics go hand in hand with a new way of thinking about sovereignty in which sovereignty is fragmented, challenged and transformed by multiple actors through the processes of subjectivation.

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<sup>3</sup> Today the term 'biopolitics' has become a broadly used term in a wide range of disciplines. To clarify my understanding of this concept, I use Lemke's description of the term 'biopolitics' as coined by Foucault in 1979 during his lecture series at the Collège de France

The biological features or 'bodies' of the population, such as 'indigeneity', could be used by a political actor such as the state, to manage, direct and control the population. (Lemke 2010: 31). Therefore, 'life' is inextricably linked with politics. Lemke proposes to analyze the dialectic process between life and politics carefully. Doing so, we must focus more on 'indirect mechanisms for inciting and directing, preventing and predicting, moralizing and normalizing'. (Lemke 2010: 432). Foucault calls these indirect forms of authoritative command '*subjectivations*':

*"Governing people, in the broad meaning of the word, is not a way to force people to do what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself."* (Foucault 1993, 203-4)

Through these subjectivations, power relations are exercised in complex relationships between different political actors. Particular 'knowledge of life' discourses are reconstructed through a subjectivation process in which the population is controlled by means of 'techniques of the self' or 'disciplinary power'. But the power relations that are (re)produced in this way could be altered, when the subjectivation process is countered by means of these very same 'techniques of the self' (Lemke, 2010).

According to Lemke "*an analysis of biopolitics should investigate the network of relations between power strategies, knowledge practices and modes of subjectivation.*" (2010: 433). Research on biopolitics should be focused on the deconstruction of the 'regimes of truth' that define 'life' in order to exercise power through subjectivation. We must see the processes of mobilizing 'knowledge of life' as strategies of power through which a population is regulated. We should analyze these processes and dynamics and deconstruct the 'structures of inequality' that are produced by biopolitical practices (Lemke 2010: 433). Lemke poses the following questions as central to this analysis: how could biopolitics serve as a tool to exercise power and how are these 'structures of inequality' such as racism and sexism, related to the biological features of individual bodies? And how do these processes of subjectivation and countering subjectivation work? Furthermore, we must take into account the particularities of these processes since they do not follow 'a global logic' (Lemke 2010: 434; Fortun et al 2010).

In this thesis I shed light on the local workings of these processes of governmentality. Due to our neoliberal system and the governmentality that goes with it, power relationships are increasingly fragmented. These fractures make room for new forms power in which the existing power relations could be altered: spaces of contestation.

Indigenous identity related to global indigeneity is used as a tool to create new spaces of contestation in order to transform power relations.

### **Indigeneity as a tool to create 'indigenous space'**

There is a lot of disagreement between different scholars about the exact definition of 'indigeneity'. Kymlicka points out that the notion of 'indigenous peoples' is connected to colonialism as it entails people who "*have had their lands conquered and settled by a colonizing society, and forcibly incorporated into a larger state dominated by this colonizing society.*" (2005: 47). There is disagreement about the nature of the colonizers and whether it only refers to 'overseas colonizers' (notably the Europeans) or also to colonizers who came overland from neighbouring countries. Li brings in the importance of a "*collective attachment to inalienable land*" (2010: 395) as a defining factor, which colludes with the fact that the expansion of global environmentalism partly caused the emergence of 'indigeneity' (Li, 2010: 395). The World Bank also recognizes that "*the identities and cultures of Indigenous Peoples are inextricably linked to the lands on which they live and the natural resources on which they depend*" (2005: par. 2).

According to Kymlicka we shouldn't focus too much on a definition of the term. The concept 'indigenous peoples' should not be about 'who was here first' as "*the dividing line between indigenous peoples and other national minorities is not clear or precise*". (Kymlicka 2005: 48). What is interesting about the notion 'IP', is how it could be instrumentalized. The status 'IP' could be helpful to address the economic and political vulnerability of cultural minorities: a tool to create 'indigenous space' (Hathaway in Fortun et al 2010: 229). Moreover, in international law the notion is used to protect these 'vulnerable peoples'. "*Because of their historic isolation or fragile ecology, indigenous peoples may be more immediately threatened by state actions than other national minorities, and hence more urgently in need of minority rights protection*". (Kymlicka 2005: 49). Apart from the 'legal' aspects of 'indigeneity' which I will further discuss in the paragraph 'indigenous rights', the emergence of 'indigeneity' could be seen as part of a broader worldwide development.

Michael Fischer calls indigeneity 'an emergent form of life' (Fischer, 2003). Fortun et al. further argue that indigeneity "*likely requires reconsideration of conventional ways of thinking about politics, geography, sovereignty, rights, and other core categories.*". As I have argued above, the emergence of indigeneity is inextricably linked with the emergence of new ideas about politics, sovereignty and citizenship. The concept of 'indigeneity' plays an important role as a way to approach the construction of a common identity which could form a basis for collective action. Indigeneity is used by IPs as an instrument to gain political space. By using their common indigenous identity to claim certain rights and a degree of autonomy, they challenge the idea of national

sovereignty and citizenship and come up with alternative forms such as cultural citizenship (a form of identity politics) and indigenous sovereignty in which one is sovereign to the own indigenous group or some sort of global indigeneity which connects all the IPs in the world and their struggles. This could lead to tensions and contradictions. Biolsi points out how the 'dual sovereignty' of Native Americans results in a tension between the conflicting individual sovereignty to the American nation and the tribal sovereignty to the own indigenous group (Biolsi 2005). Moreover, Ghosh (2006) emphasizes the divergence between the local particularities of indigeneity and the transnational discourse of indigeneity.

Additionally, Fortun et al argue that 'the indigenous' must be "*always understood in relation to the historical and discursive specificities of a state, of capital, and increasingly, of a constellation of local, national, and international NGOs.*" (2010: 230). In chapter five, I will further explore how indigenous identity is created on the friction between local discursive specificities of the Cordillera and global discourses of indigeneity.

### **Indigeneity and neoliberalism**

The current IP movements perfectly fit in the neoliberal framework of decentralization of the power of the state (which increasingly gives IP the possibility of a certain degree of self-determination) and fragmentation of sovereignty. The increased importance of indigeneity is therefore closely intertwined with other neoliberal processes such as globalization and 'governmentality' as a new way of exercising power. The indigeneity movement is part of this organic whole, this global process. At a local level, particular IPs fight elements of this process (degradation of the environment, privatization of territory) while incorporating or using other aspects of 'governmentality' (the fragmentation of sovereignty and the decentralization of (state-)power in fragmented power relations).

The neoliberal system forces Asian countries to economically 'develop' themselves since they have to compete on the world market. This development is reinforced by powerful international institutions and the Washington Consensus. According to Kymlicka this partly explains the resistance of these countries' governments against the recognition of indigenous rights and self-government (Kymlicka 2005: 50). IPs often live on lands which are rich in natural resources. According to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), these resources cannot legitimately be claimed by the state and companies without the informed consent of the indigenous population. Although most of these development projects actually enrich the elite, 'development of the country' is often used to justify extraction of 'indigenous resources' and a lack of indigenous rights and autonomy. (Kymlicka 2005: 52-53). Moreover, the

birth of neoliberalism and the governmentality that comes with it, has given rise to a new power: corporate power.

*Corporations are intimately intertwined with projects of national economic development across the so-called third world. Structural adjustment programs associated with the Washington Consensus have equated corporate-led privatization, deregulation, foreign direct investment, and liberal corporate governance with national fiscal health” (Barkan 2013: 1-2).*

These global business corporations tend to operate in an “*absence of democratic accountability*” (Barkan 2013: 2). The same could be said about the resource extraction from indigenous lands. This is often done by powerful multinationals that have little or no accountability towards the IPs. These ‘development’ projects in IP’s lands often cause environmental degradation. IPs tend to have a close cultural connection with their ancestral lands and are dependent on its natural resources. Therefore, mining, the construction of dams and the recent renewable energy projects in the Philippines and other third world countries is often met with resistance from the local indigenous populations.

Kymlicka argues that “*the point is that indigenous peoples must be actively involved in the process (e.g. through co-management), and the extraction of resources should seek to minimize cultural harm.*” (Kymlicka 2005). Because the lack of incentives to acknowledge these rights, IPs often turn to violent struggle and international pressure. This is exactly what we see in the Philippines.

### **The complexities of indigeneity**

*“indigeneity itself materializes in an intricate dynamic among converging and competing agendas, visions, and interests that transpire at local, national, and global levels” (de la Cadena & Starn 2007:12).*

The concept of ‘indigeneity’ is not easy to grasp. It involves a lot of contradictions and complexities. One example of these contradictions is that indigeneity could be understood as rendering subjectivation itself, while claiming to fight it.

Paradoxically, when contesting power relations, the contesters often partially reproduce them as they use the same discourse or mode of subjectivation. This is also the case with the indigeneity discourse. Ethnicity is a social construction that builds boundaries between assumed ‘ethnically distinct’ groups. ‘Indigeneity’, based on ethnicity is also a mechanism that includes and excludes. This mechanism that constructs social boundaries is a mechanism of power. Existing power relations are partially reproduced by using this same mechanism of in- and exclusion (indigeneity), simultaneously it can be



used as a tool for social contestation, an instrument to alter existing power relations by claiming particular group rights based on a shared indigenous identity. This ambivalence of indigeneity shows that there is no clear distinction between 'technologies of the self' and 'technologies of domination' but a constant interaction. I will further explain this paradox, using the research conducted by Kaushik Ghosh on the effects of the transnational indigenous discourse on the struggle of the Adivasi IP in India.

According to Sylvain 'global indigenism' is a transnational discourse that serves as an important tool in the indigenous struggle against neoliberal projects that are often accompanied by the dispossession of ancestral lands (Sylvain 2009). Ghosh is less positive about this phenomenon of 'global indigenism' and highlights the other side of the coin. He argues that we should take into account the discrepancy between the transnational discourse of indigeneity and the historical particularity of indigenous populations 'on the ground'. The indigeneity discourse produces a new form of indigenous subjectivity (Ghosh, 2006: 503) since it generates an 'imagined community' that presents the indigenous peoples in an essentialist way: as homogenous and sharing a unified identity. According to Ghosh, it therefore reproduces the 'primitivist essentialism' (Ghosh, 2006: 507) derived from colonial times.

Ghosh distinguishes two different modes of governmentality based on 'politics of recognition'. The first is '*exclusive governmentality*' in which '*the principle of recognition is that of exclusion*' (Ghosh 2006: 508). For example: the demand of an IP for group rights to protect their culture, based on the 'otherness' of the indigenous peoples. In contrast to exclusive governmentality, Ghosh places '*incorporative governmentality*' or "*addressing ethnicity through inclusion*" (Ghosh 2006: 508). The tribal otherness of the IPs is recognized in order to assimilate them in a particular way in the neoliberal system (a mode of subjectivation). These two forms of governmentality are intertwined and based on the same logic which produces ordinary essentialist ideas that serve as a fertile ground for nationalism (Ghosh 2006: 509). The former 'racist logic in a system of exclusive governmentality' could thus be transformed in a tool to open up political space. (Ghosh 2006: 512). "*This reveals that the functioning of this "exclusive" principle of governmentality may at times interrupt the hegemony of the state and its projects of governance.*" (Ghosh 2006: 513). 'Exclusive governmentality' is reproduced to gain indigenous rights, which is a form of 'incorporative governmentality'. Thus, in order to create 'indigenous space', the IPs "*act on their putative irreducible otherness*". (Ghosh 2006: 509).

By distinguishing these two forms of governmentality, Ghosh points out the 'neoprimitivist discourse' (Ghosh 2006: 520) that is produced in the global ethnoscape of indigeneity. NGOs, the United Nations, UNPFII, WHIP (World Heritage & Indigenous Peoples) and other international organization involved in the construction of the

transnational discourse of indigeneity create a neoprimitivist and essentialist idea of "white men (and women) saving indigenous people from brown men." (Ghosh 2006: 521). They advocate incorporative governmentality which is intertwined with the colonial exclusive governmentality, based on a racist logic. Ironically, while trying to overcome the effects of the colonial primitivist and essentialist discourses that resulted in the socioeconomic exclusion of IP's, they use exactly the same discourses and thus reproduce these ideas. Ghosh claims that:

*"Such a discourse of transnational indigeness, gaining its power from primitivism and institutions of the United Nations, seeks out token indigenous persons who are amenable to this project of global modernity and who can also stand in for the indigenous populations concerned."* (2006: 522).

Thus, by incorporating this 'neoprimitivist' transnational discourse of indigeneity, the indigenous social movements sustain forms of the neocolonialism and imperialism that are part of the neoliberal project that they claim to fight. Ghosh stresses that IP movements should be very careful with reproducing this 'neoprimitivist' discourse of global indigenism.

Charles Hale, an anthropologist who conducted research on numerous indigenous movements in Latin America, argues that social movements based on cultural politics could result in nightmares:

*"Encouraged and supported by multilateral institutions, Latin American elites have moved from being vehement opponents to reluctant arbiters of rights grounded in cultural difference. In so doing, they find that cultural rights, when carefully delimited, not only pose little challenge to the forward march of the neoliberal project but also induce the bearers of these rights to join in the march."* (2005: 13).

The indigenous movements are prone to becoming a nightmare when they are incorporated in the neoliberal system that they claim to fight through the institutionalization of indigeneity which provides a cultural minority with group rights based on the cultural difference that constitutes neoliberalism.

### **Space and identity**

When researching indigeneity and its connection to transnational discourses of indigeneity or 'global indigenism', one has to think about identity and space. Gupta and Ferguson problematize the "assumed isomorphism of space, place and culture" (1992: 609) and argue that identity is deterritorialized and localities increasingly blurred and

indeterminate. Ironically, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places seem to be more salient than ever (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 611). This is also the irony of indigenous identities that are often presented as isomorphic with a particular place and culture but in reality constructed in an interplay between local and global indigeneity discourses.

In her book 'Friction: an Ethnography of Global Connection' (2005) Anna Tsing stresses the importance of "*cross-cultural and long-distance encounters in forming everything we know as culture*". She argues that cultures are produced in interactions which she calls 'frictions': "*the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference.*" These frictions, in which the local and the universal confluence, can result in new arrangements of culture and power. When looking into the way indigenous identities are constructed in local contexts, we also have to study 'the universals' "*to identify knowledge that moves – mobile and mobilizing – across localities and cultures. Whether it is seen as underlying or transcending cultural difference, the mission of the universal is to form bridges, roads, and channels of circulation*" (Tsing 2005: 7). Frictions are spaces in which universalities and localities interact, spaces in which new connections, collaborations and hegemonies emerge that create new identities. Indigeneity is constructed in such a space of interconnection, in a creative interconnection of difference that engages both universalities and localities.

Tsing acknowledges the empowering effects that these universals can have through frictions but she also points out the irony of these universals: "*universalism is implicated in both imperial schemes to control the world and liberatory mobilizations for justice and empowerment. Universalisms inspires expansion - for both, the powerful and powerless.*" (Tsing 2005: 9). In the light of indigeneity, this argument is comparable to Hale's argument on neoliberal multiculturalism. Indigenous movements tend to be based on universalisms, on 'internationally mandated standards' (Tsing 2005: 9) such as 'indigenous rights'. Tsing argues that these universalisms paradoxically "*extend the reach of the forms of power they protest*" (Tsing 2005: 9).

## **METHODOLOGY**

I conducted my research in Mountain Province, Cordillera region, the Philippines. My case-study was the opposition to a windfarm, which was successfully opposed a year before. I soon noticed that the opposition to the windfarm, was connected to a broader opposition to corporate energy projects in general, so I also studied other cases of resistance to energy projects, although the windfarm remained my main focus. The opposition to renewable energy projects served as a tool for me to gain insight in the workings of indigeneity on the ground. I gained insight in the way in which networks, discourses and identities are used in different contexts in an interplay between different levels of organization and different spaces. Furthermore, I gained a deeper understanding of how indigeneity discourses and the construction of indigenous identities contributed to the success of the opposition as the foundation for a Cordillera wide movement which is connected to the global indigenous movement. To be able to operationalize abstract concepts such as 'discourse' and 'identity', I used a wide range of methods (triangulation).

To gain more insight in power relations on a local level, I mapped the different actors and networks that played a role in the windfarm issue and observed how and why people move between different networks. I also mapped the organizational structure of the CPA to learn about the workings of the organization and mobilization. To identify the most powerful discourses, I documented 'narratives of power' that were told by my informants and analyzed patterns in the instrumentalization of these narratives. I learned about 'indigenous identity' by paying close attention to how my informants spoke about themselves in relation to others in different contexts, using the boundary model of Frederik Barth (1969). Moreover, I paid attention to shared symbols, narratives and popular culture. The main methods I used were semi-structured interviews and participant observation. I based most of my discourse analysis on interviews and informal conversations with my informants. I conducted participant observation in events in which I expected to encounter indigenous identities and discourses and in the daily lives of the people of Sagada and Besao, in a holistic approach.

For three months I stayed with the communities who would be affected by the construction of a windfarm in Mountain Province, in multiple *barangays*<sup>4</sup> in the municipalities of Besao and Sagada. During most part of my fieldwork I was based in Sagada Poblacion, from where I travelled to the more remote *barangays* to conduct interviews and to do participant observation. I used the windfarm as case-study to gain insight in the way networks are constructed and based on discourses and shared identities and in the way these networks could be mobilized when the group is

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<sup>4</sup> a village within a municipality, the smallest administrative unit in the Cordillera. Indigenous terms can be found in the glossary in appendix A.

threatened. These networks extended to different 'levels of organization': the regional, national and international. This is why I also travelled along with some of the indigenous activists to Baguio (Benguet province) and Pasil (Kalinga Province) to gain insight in the workings of the CPA network as this network is used for the mobilization for events such as centralized Cordillera Day and a women's summit on renewable energy. Because of the connection of the peoples organizations in the *barangays*, with various levels of organization up to the head office in Baguio, and international indigenous movements, I also included other places and spaces, which make my fieldwork multi-sited in a way. This multi-sited aspect of my research was inevitable as localities and universalities constantly interact in this globalized world. Gupta and Ferguson state that space is inherently fragmented and identity deterritorialized (Gupta & Ferguson 1992). Indigeneity could be seen as an 'ethnoscape' (Appadurai 2000) that is not bounded to a particular territory but that is generated through the disjuncture of flows, processes and spaces. According to Marcus (1995), we have to acknowledge the inevitability of multi-sited fieldwork and overcome dichotomies such as the "local" and "global" and the "lifeworld and the "system".

*"Ethnography moves from its conventional single-site location, contextualized by macro constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation"* (Crate 2011: 185).

In my research I connected the local situation and the people's lives (localities) to global developments, such as climate change and neoliberal globalization (universalities).

During my fieldwork, I worked together with Tanguyub People's center, one of the peoples organizations under the umbrella of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance. I made use of their knowledge and their close connections with peoples organizations in the *barangays* to be able to find the right informants, using a snowball method. Most of the time, I was travelling from *barangay* to *barangay*, where I conducted three cycles of visits to my key informants. Every visit I gained more insight in the situation, in a cyclic process of gathering data and interim analysis. In order to explain my choice to conduct a collaborative research with the Cordillera Peoples Alliance I will now elaborate on my perspective on the relation between science and society.

### **Science and society**

*"Anthropologists who are privileged to witness human events close-up and over time have an ethical obligation to identify the ills in a spirit of solidarity and to follow a 'womanly' ethic of care and responsibility."* (Scheper-Hughes 1995).

When thinking about the ethics of research, one has to think about the goal of science.

Why am I doing this research and who is benefitting from it? Is my graduation my only goal? Or is it my contribution to 'science', whatever that may be? What is my position in the field as a female white western-educated anthropologist and how are scientists taking part in the (re)construction of 'regimes of truths' which constitute power relations? How could I help the political movements with ideologies that I believe are worth fighting for? Or doesn't it do any good when an anthropologist 'takes her politics to the field' as it will result in a subjective perspective that undermines the classical positivist approach that is believed to be the foundation of science?

Fiona Dove<sup>5</sup> claims that "*we have to overcome the pure science – applied science dichotomy.*"<sup>6</sup> Research has to be relevant for society and has to contribute to the betterment of society in a way. Furthermore, the knowledge that is generated in this research, should be part of the public domain. In this paragraph I plead for an engaged anthropology which overcomes the dichotomy pointed out by Dove.

Knowledge is generated within power relations. Foucault points out the link between power relations and the construction of knowledge or 'regimes of truth' (1977). Power is present in every social situation and therefore anthropologists can't place themselves outside or 'above' the power structures in which they are situated. When they do so, they fail to recognize their role in reproducing the knowledge that constitutes power relations, and thus reproduce the status quo. Abu-Lughod (1991) takes a more radical stance, arguing that culture is a social construct, constructed by the anthropologist to create difference. According to her, culture is a tool for categorization and a way to reconstruct power relations that sustain a hierarchy as "*culture operates much like its predecessor race*" (1991: 470).

Being entirely objective when doing anthropological research is impossible since knowledge is always positioned; constructed in a particular context. Therefore, 'pure' positivist research is impossible and undesirable. We should acknowledge that an anthropologist is a political being that is allowed to support a political movement in his/her research but we should by no means abandon our critical stance toward our research population. When doing collaborative research, self-reflection, a critical stance, transparency and triangulation are of major importance, as the movement or organization one supports, does not benefit from false information. Anthropological research could be of great value for these movements, as an anthropologist will never be entirely part of the research population and hence, is able to remain critical, while at the same time establishing rapport by supporting the movement to gain insight in the workings of the movement and its knowledge. This is a fruitful position that could both

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<sup>5</sup> Fiona Dove is the executive director of the Transnational Institute: a transnational activists research network.

<sup>6</sup> Quote from a debate on science for social change, organised by Kritische Studenten Utrecht, on 01-18-2014 in the Kargadoor, Utrecht.

contribute to produce a new epistemology for science and could help to alter unequal power relations which result in marginalization of particular groups in society.

Charles Hale (2006) argues that a combination of activism and science could lead to the enrichment of research and the production of new insights and knowledge. We have to learn to think outside our own western anthropocentric framework. Political movements generate new knowledge, from which we can learn. To situate this knowledge, we have to deconstruct the power relations in which this knowledge is produced.

Susan Crate (2011) argues for an engaged 'climate ethnography' as "*considering the moral, ethical, and human rights issues of climate change for most of the world's peoples, anthropologists need to take on climate change as a means to address the structural features of global inequality*" (183). Since mostly western countries benefit from the Kyoto Protocol and the trade in carbon emissions could have negative consequences in local contexts, anthropologists should advocate for affected groups with the aim of empowering local communities (Crate 2011: 182). This 'climate ethnography' should be multi-sited, interdisciplinary, collaborative and reflexive. Besides, studying how local populations are affected by climate change and climate change policies that deepen worldwide inequality, we should take a critical position towards our own lifestyle: our energy-intensive Western consumption (Crate 2011: 185). Hale (2006) additionally argues that the combination of activist research and cultural critique are a fertile ground for the generation of new epistemology.

Reciprocity, dialogue and responsibility of the anthropologist regarding his/her research population are key concepts when one wants to do collaborative research. These characteristics contribute to a moral anthropology in which the anthropologist is allowed to take a moral and thus political stance.

### **An engaged anthropology**

With my research, I want to gain a deeper understanding of the neoliberal forms of power which are expressed in governmentality and the manners in which these power relations could be altered to accomplish social change. It is one of the tasks of scientists to deconstruct those power relations and support marginalized people in their struggle to open up spaces for social contestation. Especially in issues regarding climate change, there is an urge for what Crate calls 'multistakeholder research' (2011). Because of these research aims, I chose to incorporate aspects of collaborative research. During my research, I collaborated with an organization that is part of the indigenous movement of the Cordillera: the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA). CPA is an independent peoples' organization that promotes indigenous rights and supports the Cordillera peoples in their struggle for self-determination. I approached them and asked them what would be

interesting for them for me to research. They proposed that I would research a renewable energy project, since it is a big issue at the moment in the Cordillera and asked me to focus my research on a windmill park in Sagada-Besao, Mountain Province. The CPA has an umbrella structure and extensive connections with grassroots people's organisations on the community level. My research was hosted by one of those people's organisations: Tangguyub People's Center, based in Sagada Poblacion. During my research I tried to avoid a subject-object relationship with my informants. This is particularly important in the Cordillera, where the indigenous peoples have a history of marginalization and exploitation by 'white people' which started in colonial times and still continues today. I wanted to avoid any unequal relationships with my informants and approached them as the experts. Working this way, I was able to create a strong relationship based on reciprocity and trust, with my hosts and key-informants in the *barangays*. Besides creating rapport, an equal relationship allowed me to use intersubjectivity as a research method. I often discussed my interim analysis with my key informants and their feedback gave me the possibility to improve my analysis. As my research area consisted of multiple 'levels or organisations, I tried to make use of this intersubjectivity on multiple levels: with my key-informants in the *barangays*, with the staff of Tangguyub people's center and with the CPA head office in Baguio, where I presented my interim analysis halfway my research. Political movements generate knowledge that has to be 'gathered' by the anthropologist, therefore intersubjectivity is very valuable. The informants are the experts, and it is important to have a chance to correct mistakes or discuss different perspectives on a matter.

Reciprocity and responsibility were two central concepts in my research. As a researcher you have certain responsibilities towards your informants, the university, and society (which is understood and framed by the knowledge produced by science). As a researcher and 'producer of knowledge' it is important to constantly analyze what your position is, in the field and in society in general. How are you situated in the local power relations and what is your responsibility regarding this position? What are the consequences of your deeds? This varies from the responsibility for the safety of your informants to the responsibility as a researcher to create awareness about 'invisible' issues, monitor the situation and make your knowledge public. Reciprocity has also been a central concept in my research and also varies on different levels. Reciprocity could mean a day of work in the *uma* of my host or offering myself as a secretary during an international workshop, as well as making my research a contribution to the indigenous movement, which could help them improving their strategies, and creating awareness 'back home' for the issues of the IPs in the Cordillera.

Collaborative research also poses some difficulties such as ensuring a critical stance and the danger of one-sided information. To engage these difficulties, I established



relationships with multiple people 'outside of the movement' and learned a lot from comparing their different perspectives on the situation. In order to establish these relationships, I could not always work openly with Tangguyub and had to be very aware of the consequences of my relationship with some of the major activists, being public.

One other aspect of engaged anthropology is acknowledging that knowledge belongs in the public sphere. Therefore I will write multiple other documents, besides my thesis. I will write an article for the CPA magazine, and issue a journalistic article on the matter, focused on the 'local impacts' of intensive energy consumption in the west and globalized climate policies. I will try to publish this article in a Dutch newspaper, in order to create awareness here. Moreover, I will write a less abstract and theoretical version of my thesis to send to the communities where I did my research. In this way I hope that my thesis, although in different forms, will actually be read and that the knowledge that me and my informants generated, could return to the public domain, where it belongs.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT**

### **The Cordillera**

The Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) on Northern Luzon is a mountainous area with elevations between 1000 en 2400 meters. CAR consists of six provinces: Abra, Apayo, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga and Mountain Province.

Multiple indigenous peoples live in this region: The Yapayao, Kalinga, Ifugao, Tingian, Bontoc, Kankanaey, Isneg and Iboloy. These indigenous categories are foremost based on differences in language but there are categorizations that deviate from the linguistic categorization. The indigenous peoples collectively identify as the Cordillera Peoples or 'Igorots'. My research area consisted of the municipalities of Sagada and Besao in Mountain Province. The indigenous people living there, define themselves as 'Applai tribe' or 'kankanaey' which is the language they speak. There have been several

attempts in the past to create an 'autonomous' region but the proposed acts were disapproved by the Cordillera people and did not get a majority vote in the referendum. The Cordillera people have a history of armed resistance. Nowadays, the guerillas of the militant wing of the Communist party, the New Peoples Army, fights against the the government military in the mountains of the Cordillera.



<http://tourism-philippines.com/sagada/>

### **CPA's struggle for self-determination**

The Cordillera Peoples' Alliance (CPA) is a coalition of 297 NGOs and peoples organizations that was created in 1984 with the aim to organize the indigenous peoples and build alliances. The organization has a congress that is democratically elected and provincial chapters that are closely connected to peoples organisations and NGOs in the communities. The CPA is acknowledged as the '*largest legal mass base of the Cordillerans*' (Hyndman 1991: 175). The aim of the CPA is a certain level of self-determination: "*a genuine regional autonomy within the framework of a democratic coalition government.*" (Hyndman 1991: 175) This autonomy should include rights to ancestral lands and natural resources, cultural self-determination and regional political autonomy. They organize the 'annual' Cordiday on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April to commemorate martyr Macliim Dulag who died in the Chico Dam Struggle. This is the most important political event in the region.

### **Indigenous rights in the Philippines: IPRA**

In 1997 the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) was passed. The act is based upon UNDRIP, which was partially drafted by the CPA and in theory recognizes the ancestral lands of the Cordilleran people. A National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) was established. This commission is responsible for the protection and promotion of the Philippine IPs. However, in practice the indigenous rights are often violated. There are several controversial laws such as the Regalian Doctrine, the Mining Act and the Renewable Energy Act, that undermine IPRA, notably the right to control over ancestral lands and natural resources. The CPA thus rejects IPRA.

### **Ancestral lands: NCIP & Ancestral domain**

In the IPRA law acknowledges the right of IPs to control ancestral domains and lands. The NCIP issues certificates of ancestral domain titles (CADT) and certificates of ancestral lands titles (CALT). As I stated above, there are several laws that undermine indigenous rights. The Regalian Doctrine, for instance, dictates that lands of the public domain are owned by the state. These public domains include lands with a slope of 18° and above and thus, most parts of the mountainous Cordillera region. Hence, these lands could not be titled and this undermines the right of IPs to assert control over their ancestral domains. Furthermore, the process to acquire CADT/CALT is complicated and bureaucratic, which discourages the IPs to start the process.

### **The entrance of corporate energy projects in the Cordillera**

As I mentioned in the introduction, multilateral institutions such as the WTO have pushed third world countries to implement neoliberal policies in the name of economic development. Deregulation of the state market and free trade have opened up the Philippines for multinational corporations that seek to extract resources in the territories of indigenous peoples. There is a current trend of the implementation of renewable energy (RE) projects in the Cordillera, as the area is rich in wind power, water power and geothermal power. According to research of Apit Tako, 1 wind power project, 7 geothermal projects and 43 hydro power projects will be implemented in 2014. 60 more projects are pending, waiting for permission from the Department of Energy (DoE). The Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) of 2001, largely privatized the energy sector to trigger competition and attract private-sector investments. In the Renewable Energy Act (REA) of 2008, fiscal incentives are secured for the renewable energy corporations, such as income tax holidays for seven years, duty free importation for ten years et cetera. These acts that provide *'the legal framework for profiting on renewable energy'* (CPA 2013) have attracted Philippine companies with foreign investors, such as Aboitiz and PhilCarbon and multinational corporations, such as Chevron, to the Cordillera.

### **Carbon credits**

Another and maybe even more significant incentive, for the implementation of RE projects in the Cordillera, are the immense profits that could be gained from the trade in carbon credits. As is determined in article 17 of the Kyoto protocol, emission units could be spared and sold to countries that are over their targets on the 'carbon market' with the aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A pollutive corporation could thus compensate its emissions by investing in a carbon offset program such as reforestation or renewable energy. The trade in carbon credits has resulted in an increase of renewable energy projects in the Philippines. Foreign investors from pollutive first world countries invest in carbon offsets in the less pollutive third world countries to compensate their greenhouse gas emissions. A consequence of the market based solutions for climate change of the Kyoto Protocol, is that carbon has now become a commodity. For the renewable energy corporations involved in these carbon offset programs, the trade of 'carbon credits' means additional profit.

### **Resistance to Corporate Energy projects**

The Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), an Philippines based, international partner organization of the CPA, recently called for action against the corporate energy projects implemented on 'indigenous lands' all over the world, stating that: "*energy projects and extractive industries, often state-backed and corporate-controlled, are the top violators of indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources as these also directly affect our culture and identity.*" (IPMSDL, 2013). As alternatives, the IPMSDL presents community-owned sustainable and environmental-friendly renewable energy projects that are appropriate to the needs, culture, and condition of indigenous communities (IPMSDL, 2013). Resisting 'destructive corporate energy projects' is one of the priorities at the moment for the Cordillera Peoples Alliances and its partner organizations. Currently, a lot of research is conducted on renewable energy projects by peasants organization Apit Tako that is part of the CPA network, as these projects are identified as one of the major threats for the Cordilleran IPs. In local contexts, there have been militant and non-militant actions against the construction of dams, windfarms and geothermal projects which include the destruction of materials and petitions.

### **Case-study: the Sagada-Besao Wind Power Project**

PhilCarbon is a Philippine company with foreign investors. In 2011 they proposed the construction of a windmill park along the Langsayan-Pilao ridge that divides the Besao and Sagada municipalities of Mountain Province. The proposed area for the project is part

of the Ancestral Domain Management Units (ADMUs). Therefore, PhilCarbon has to consult the NCIP for the FPIC (Free Prior Informed Consent) process. In the FPIC process meetings were conducted in the communities of the affected barangays in which the were supposed to decide whether they would give their consent for the windfarm. No final meeting was arranged but the community members who attended the meetings gave PhilCarbon permission to do tests for 1,5 year. Not long after some of the community members gave their consent for testing, the opposition to the windfarm was growing. The opponents claimed that they were insufficiently informed about the environmental impact of the windfarm during the FPIC process, notably the possible impact on the watershed that is located on the ridge that provides drinking and irrigation water to several communities. After 6 months of testing, a wind measure device was destroyed by opponents of the project. PhilCarbon has removed the measure device and has not been heard of after this event. The Sagada police is investigating the case. It is unclear whether PhilCarbon will push through the construction of the windmill park, but if they want to continue the project, they will have to consult NCIP to continue the FPIC process. It is also unclear why PhilCarbon did not complete the FPIC process and whether they stopped the process because of the people's resistance.

## **CHAPTER 3: NARRATIVES OF POWER**

Pagsarmingan (Reflection) I

Madi ti aginbubulsek  
Saan gayam a matalek  
Ti sao ti gubyerno  
Ag-agin a progreso  
Ikari da't init ken bulan  
Amin a kapintasan  
Ngem no dumanon to ti tiempo  
Agpatingga ti sao

Those who act blind  
Should not be trusted  
Like the government  
That is preaching fake development  
They promise the sun and the moon  
All that is beautiful  
But time will come  
that promises will end<sup>7</sup>

When living among the Applai tribe in Sagada and Besao, I encountered numerous local narratives of power: narratives of autonomy and the violation of autonomy, narratives of subjugation and resistance, narratives of dissolution and defence of indigenous traditions, narratives of the destruction and protection of ancestral lands, narratives of corporate power and the people's power...

In this chapter I give an overview of the power relations that play a role on a local level, based on 'narratives of power' that were told by the villagers. Narratives help to define the borders, supposed nature and shared desires of a community and reveal local diversities, conflicting interest and alliances within regional, national and international networks. These narratives play a major role in processes of identity formation. On basis of these shared narratives an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) is constructed that politically strengthens the group, as this shared identity can serve as a basis for the mobilization of a powerful network, when the group is threatened.

### **Constructing a local history**

*"People in the Cordillera, who used to be called Igorots, never bowed their heads for the conquerors" a Sagadian elder explained to me, when I asked him why the Igorots are called 'indigenous'. "They maintained their culture, they maintained their identity as a people. They were never subjugated to the colonizers. Not like our brothers in the lowlands. Their culture was diminished because they were deculturalized by the*

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<sup>7</sup> An excerpt from Pagsarmingan (reflection), a song composed by cultural group Salidummay during the height of the San Roque Dam struggle to share the experience of the Benguet people when the Ambuklao Dam was set up. Translation by: Alma Sinumlag (CWEARC).

*colonizers. If you look here in Sagada; we have the Church, we have the school, but we still practice our culture.” (02-19 Ugale, Sagada Poblacion).*

This elder’s idea about being indigenous, points out the connection between indigenous identity and colonial history. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Spanish had been attempting to control the Cordillera region, looking for the famous rich gold mines that were controlled by the Cordillerans. They never came any further than Benguet, which caused a lot of anger and embarrassment on the side of the Spanish Kingdom (Scott<sup>8</sup> 1970). Their coercive approach can be seen as a form of ‘exclusive governmentality’<sup>9</sup> as defined by Ghosh in which the Spaniards attempted to control the population by means of direct rule. This exclusive mode of governmentality is illustrated by the term ‘Igorot’ which was used by the Spaniards to categorize the Cordilleran tribes. It derives from the words ‘y’ which means ‘in’ or ‘from’ and ‘golot’ which means ‘mountain’, thus ‘Igorots’ literally means ‘people residing in the mountains’. Because of the failure of the Spanish colonizers to conquer the Igorots and the subsequent anger and embarrassment, it became a derogatory term which legitimized the violent expeditions to the Cordilleran mountains as Spanish theologians were “*wondering if God had really buried all that gold in the mountains of Northern Luzon just for the use of a horde of naked savages*” (Scott 1970: 698). An elder and politician also pointed out that the term became widely used by the lowlanders to categorize the Cordilleran tribes:

*“The term was associated with savage, dirty. The Spaniards used the term to equate us with savages. Our lowland brothers, who became slaves, colonized, started to regard us the same. It used to be a problem during earlier times. When the Americans took over, the connotations remained. The Americans didn’t regard us that way, the Spaniards did.” (04-13 Biag, Sagada Poblacion).*

This quote also highlights the different perception of the approach of the Americans, compared to the Spanish approach. The American policies regarding the IPs can be seen as a form of ‘incorporative governmentality’<sup>10</sup>. The Americans appointed tribal leaders for local government positions: a form of indirect rule. They partly recognized the traditional political systems of the IPs, in order to incorporate them (Yogaswara 2001: 146).

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<sup>8</sup> William Henry Scott (1921-1993) was a missionary and historian, who studied the history of the tribes living in Mountain Province. He specialized in the Igorots’ resistance to Spanish colonization. He concluded that, because of the colonial attitude of the Spaniards and the use of the term ‘Igorot’, a national minority was created, since historical evidence points out that the lowlanders and highlanders shared attributes, beliefs and traditions such as gongs and headhunting before they were colonized by the Spaniards and partly assimilated to Spanish culture and Catholicism. His work is widely known in the Cordillera and proudly referred to by many Igorots.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Exclusive governmentality’ is a mode of governmentality in which ‘the principle of recognition is that of exclusion’ (Ghosh 2006: 508).

<sup>10</sup> The term ‘incorporative governmentality’ refers to a mode of governmentality which is based on “addressing ethnicity through inclusion” (Ghosh 2006: 508).

Because they used existing power structures and did not undermine the local systems of governance, they were allowed to build schools, hospitals, churches, and roads and to introduce English and American history in the area's education systems. The success of the American approach is still very salient in Mountain Province. According to many of my informants the Americans did not colonize the Cordillera but only 'influenced' the region in a positive way: "*The Americans brought civilization: school and churches. Before, the people here were headhunters.*" (Masaybeng, interview 04-03). This quote points out that the indigenous communities in the mountains understood the difference between the two types of governmentality very well. Incorporative governmentality is based on the same recognition of difference as exclusive governmentality. The processes of exclusive and incorporative governmentality have contributed to the formation of the Igorots as national minority based on assumed ethnic difference.

After 'independence'<sup>11</sup> in 1946, dictator Marcos set forth the assimilation policies of the Americans, attempting to subordinate the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera. In this period the conflict between the Cordillerans and the state deepened. Until today, the constructed differences between the 'Igorots' and the lowlanders are embedded in the national power structures. These differences are emphasized in narratives of power:

*"You can tell the Igorots apart by their appearance. The lowlanders are taller and slender. There are physical differences and the dialect is different. They say "Igorots have tails". We don't have a good relationship with them. They say the Igorots are not Filipinos."* (Masaybeng, interview 04-03).

Power differences based on assumed 'ethnic differences' are a tool for the Philippine state to control. The Igorots were not included in the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) during the state making process after independence. On the other hand, these 'politics of difference'<sup>12</sup>, based on the racist logic that derives from colonial times, could also be a powerful tool for the Igorots themselves. The very same difference could be instrumentalized in identity politics in order to mobilize the Cordillerans and form a politically powerful entity. The quote below, from an NPA guerilla, shows how these politics of difference work:

*"The people here are oppressed because they're indigenous. It's the chauvinism of the ruling class. Being Filipino also means being oppressed with imperialism in*

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<sup>11</sup> Several political scientists have labelled the Philippines as a 'neo colony' (Boone Schirmer 1975; Hutschcroft 1991) that never gained full independence from the U. S.

<sup>12</sup> The 'politics of difference' is a term coined by Charles Taylor (1992). It is a type of 'politics of recognition' in which we are asked to recognize the unique identity of an individual or group, often in reaction to assimilation policies. "*The politics of difference is full of denunciations of discrimination and refusals of second-class citizenship.*" (1992: 39).



*combination with the ruling class. We are regarded as second class citizens, that doubles the oppression. It's ironic, because historically the indigenous people were the ones who were able to resist the colonization of the Spanish. These people were able to preserve their culture and that's the reason why they're marginalized."* (NPA guerilla, 03-22).

Through these narratives of power, a shared local history is constructed, based on differences that define the boundaries<sup>13</sup> between peoples, and thus define the communities. This local history, that is shaped by narratives of power, plays a major role in processes of identity formation. A common theme running through these narratives, is the denial of the Cordillerans' full citizenship. As farmer Masaybeng stated above: *"they say the Igorots are not Filipinos"*. This perception is embedded in the local history of the Cordilleran tribes.

Because of the denial of full citizenship, indigenous peoples looked for alternative forms of sovereignty. In the Cordillera the indigenous socio-political systems (ISPS) still play a major role and the sovereignty of the people to local councils consisting of elders or local chieftains, make it more difficult for the state and other political entities to control the Cordilleran people. Nevertheless, they are not completely independent of the state and therefore their sovereignty tends to be fragmented.

### **Dissolution and defense of cultural heritage**

*"Before the Igorots had an own government, but it was unwritten. The Igorots are not dumb people! They united themselves to build villages, even in times of headhunting. The dap-ay is like a government with laws. The majority is relying on the government here but we have our own laws and traditions like ub-ubbo (labor exchange). We have to obey the national law but the national government, they corrupt our money. The source of money is from the poor but they take our taxes for their own benefit, like Napoles."<sup>14</sup>* (Masaybeng, interview 04-03).

In my first week in Sagada I spoke with one of the most respected elders about my research. He told me that if I would stay longer, I would notice that there's a 'dual government' in the village: *"A government which is managed by the local government officials, the barangay officials, and the government which is the traditional government, that's being led by the elders"* (Ugale, 02-19 Poblacion). He was right. During my stay I

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<sup>13</sup> According to Fredrik Barth (1969), boundaries are negotiated in social interaction between ethnic groups in which ethnic identity is created. These boundaries, based on ascribed and self-acribed differences, define the different groups.

<sup>14</sup> Janet Napoles is a businesswoman who cooperated with congress members and other government officials to set up the 'Priority Development Assistance Fund' scam in which billions were transferred to their bank accounts via ghost projects and ghost NGO's.

learned about the indigenous socio-political structure (ISPS) of the *Kankanaey*<sup>15</sup> that plays a major role in regulating the socio-cultural aspects of the peoples' lives.

Historically, the Igorots were not conquered by the Spaniards and were therefore able to maintain their own ISPS. Later on, during the American colonization, the Igorots were allowed to maintain this system to a certain extent. The ISPS, that is still widely practiced in Mountain Province, is called the '*dap-ay*'.

In the northern *barangays* of Sagada, I befriended two women, Labanet and Clebe, with whom I stayed for some days. They were very interested in my research and told me several times that it is of great importance that the knowledge of the elders is documented, as traditions are slowly diminishing. They advised me with whom I should talk and we hiked from house to house to interview the most knowledgeable elders. The elders told me that nowadays, the *dap-ay* is essentially a sacred place where *begnas* (rituals) are performed. But it is also a place for common decision making and knowledge sharing. Central to the *dap-ay* are the elders or *amam a*, who are seen as the dedicated leaders of the community. The *amam a* make decisions based on what is the best for the *ili* (the community and the land) and perform the rituals. One of the elders told me that "*the role of the dap-ay in agriculture is big. We can't cultivate the rice, if there are no rituals in the dap-ay.*" (Manugan, interview 03-19). The *dap-ay* regulates the synchronized agricultural calendar that is based on a year long cycle of planting and harvesting rice and the related rituals. The elders also told me about the customary law that is still practiced. There are some directives upon which these customary laws are based that could be summarized in (1) harmony within the community and (2) harmony of the community with nature. Two of the key values of the *dap-ay* are *inayan*, the taboo on bad behaviour toward other community members and the environment, and *ub-ubo*: cooperation. Values like these, are upheld by customary laws that regulate many social and cultural aspects of the daily lives of the villagers.

The elders were very happy to tell me about their traditions and one of them even came to my host's house to talk about the *dap-ay* for hours past midnight. All the elders I spoke to had the idea that strength of the *dap-ay* was slowly diminishing. I also noticed the urge of Clebe and Labanet to document the diminishing traditions. Labanet explained: "*Our traditions are our strength. You can't go forward if you don't look back from where you came from*". My hosts made sure that I wrote everything down properly and that I spelled the names of the rituals correctly. "*We always ask them for everything*", said Labanet just before one of the interviews, "*who will have the knowledge when they die? I make notes as well*" (03-19). When I asked the *barangay* captain about the disintegration of the *dap-ay*, he explained that:

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<sup>15</sup> *Kankanaey* is a term that refers to the language 'Kankanaey' as well as the people speaking this language in Mountain Province and Northern Benguet. It is regarded as an ethnic category based on a linguistic category.

*"If the elders will continue, the younger generations will follow. Me myself was in the dap-ay since I was a child. Now I pass it on to my son and grandchildren. It's up to them to pass. But everybody is willing to know what happened before, because that's what makes us intact."* (Balaleng, informal conversation 03-18).

The *dap-ay* is the cultural heritage of the people in Sagada and Besao which defines 'who' the communities are. Narratives of dissolution and defense of the *dap-ay* shape the identity of the people as they define the supposed nature of the community and shared desires for the future. The political role of the *dap-ay* has been disintegrated in the past century. During the colonization of the area by the American missionaries, the Episcopal Church that was established in 1904 in Sagada Poblacion and the Local Government Unit (LGU), that soon followed, became major political players in the province and the political power of the *dap-ay* decayed. Nowadays, the elders are still consulted when problems occur, but they are not central anymore in the political process. Their role is partially taken over by the *barangay officials*<sup>16</sup> who work for the LGU. Nonetheless, most socio-economic and cultural aspects of the *dap-ay* persist and play an important role in the lives of the indigenous communities and there is a strong consensus that it is important to preserve the indigenous culture.

The *dap-ay* in Mountain Province, still controls most social, agricultural and cultural aspects of indigenous society, the possibility of subjectivation by the Philippine government, corporations and international organisations (WTO, World Bank, IMF) is limited. The elders are still consulted when problems occur within the community and the communities prefer to solve problems with customary law, without the involvement of the LGU or national law. These 'two governments' results in a dual sovereignty: on the one hand the sovereignty of the LGU and national law, and on the other hand the *dap-ay* with its customary laws and the *ili* to whom the people have their responsibilities. This dual sovereignty sometimes results in tensions, complexities and conflicts in the barangays.

### **Military presence: contested autonomy**

*Thursday morning I was working in the uma<sup>17</sup> with Clebe when soldiers entered the barangay. Clebe was getting a bit stressed because they were standing on a hill overlooking the uma and they kept looking at us. Of course the sight of an americano<sup>18</sup> working in the uma is not something they see everyday. When we walked up to the*

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<sup>16</sup> *Barangay* officials are the official political leaders of the *barangay* who are democratically elected by the communities.

<sup>17</sup> An 'uma' is a slash and burn field or 'swidden farm' used for the cultivation of root crops. Indigenous terms can be found in the glossary in appendix A.

<sup>18</sup> White people are referred to with the term 'americano' regardless of their nationality.

*village, they asked me about my purpose. I told them I was an anthropology student from the Netherlands and that I was living in the village to study the culture. I asked them about their purpose, and they told me they were in the village to help the community to built something, like bayanihan<sup>19</sup>. I asked them why they brought their firearms with them if they wanted to built something and they told me that there's insurgency here in the Philippines and that I'm probably not familiar with that, since I'm from the Netherlands. The ambiance was very tense in the village. Some soldiers were hanging around in the dap-ay, others were going from door to door and the villagers were nervous. (fieldnotes 04-14, Sagada).*

Those soldiers came from the mountains, from an encounter with the New Peoples Army in which they lost five of their men, not far from Pidelisan. Their battalion consisted of 72 soldiers and they planned to camp in the village for a while. I joined the soldiers and villagers in the *dap-ay*. The barangay captain and the battalion's commanding officer were having a tense conversation. A friend approached me with a serious look on his face. "They want to stay because they say there are many NPAs here, but the capitan asked them to leave because we don't want any armed groups here." (04-10 Bacayan Pidelisan).

The daily lives of the villagers is influenced by the ongoing struggle between the New People's Army (NPA) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Because of their militancy and their possibility to use force, they are two powerful political players in Mountain Province that influence the power structures in the localities. The villagers find themselves in between these two actors. trying to define their relationship towards these parties, which both seek sovereignty. It became very clear how this was attempted by the AFP. Their new insurgency program carries the name '*Oplan Bayanihan*' in which *bayanihan* serves as a cover to stay inside the community in order to identify NPA members or supporters. 'Building something' to win the hearts and the minds of the people. The support for the New People's Army used to be widespread in the northern *barangays* of Sagada but in the 80s some military mistakes were made of which civilians became victims. In combination with a friction within the NPA, this led to a decrease of support. "These are challenges for us. We have to unite and try to win the masses of the northern *barangays*.". (NPA member, 03-22). The NPA officially respects 'village dynamics' but assists when problems or conflicts occur, if the community allows them. 'The villagers' are not a homogenous entity in this conflict. The situation is further complicated by the close kinship ties between villagers and family members that are either part of the army or the NPA.

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<sup>19</sup> Bayanihan is a community effort or 'cooperation'. It is the Tagalog word for *ub-ubbo*.

*"There are big problems between the government and the people. That's the reason why there are outsiders (...) The laws in the constitution are affecting the poor people because the rich people have money to pay the attorney. There's corruption, that's why there are outsiders people. They think it's better to go outside to make another government, a communist government."* (03-20, interview Manugan).

This is what one of my informants told me when I asked him about 'the people from the mountains'. The topic 'NPA' is taboo for most people and if people speak about them, they often refer to them as 'outsiders' or 'people from the mountains'. 'To go to the mountains' usually means 'joining the NPA rebels'. It is dangerous to be associated with the NPA, since the secret service has its eyes and ears everywhere, and being associated with the NPA means that you could end up on one of the *Oplan Bayanihan* lists and disappear.

The position of the communities 'between' these two armed forces, does not necessarily mean that they are objects that have to deal with whatever the NPA or the AFP does in their *barangay*. The communities have a degree of autonomy and can, to a certain extent, decide themselves who is allowed to enter their *barangay*, and in this way limit the actions of the AFP and the NPA. One of my informants attended a meeting between the AFP and the *barangay* officials in Besao municipality:

*"They accused the barangay officials of helping the NPA. The barangay officials said "of course we feed them, they're humans like you and me. We have to, they are our visitors". The army officers replied that they should warn them, if they entered their barangays. The barangay officials said "so you will make a battleground of our barangay? Of course we cannot do that."* (Caeg, informal conversation 03-01).

The same accounts for the NPAs, who are often not allowed to get involved in *barangay* issues either. I was talking with one of the villagers about the last tribal war between the *dalikan* and *pidelisan* tribe in 1999: *"Before, government officers, AFP and PNP wanted to enter the barangay but the women went to Madongo to barricade the road, so no armed group could enter. We didn't want them to get involved, its a tribal war. The NPAs weren't allowed to intervene in the conflict either."* (Wanay, interview 03-20). Most people I spoke to, emphasize that they do not support either of the two which brings them in a safe position.

The LGU also has a degree of autonomy when it comes to the entrance of armed forces in the municipality. The former mayor of Sagada told me about a peace zone that was established during his term in 1989. A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was

signed by the LGU and the AFP that forbids the entry of armed groups in the municipality.

*"There was a time that people were afraid to work on their fields. They were often subject to question by passing soldiers and there were disappearances. Many of our folks were asking questions about how to approach these problems (...) The Sagada natives had both members in NPA and army members. It is a small town with close kinship ties. It is not part of our character to see our children killing each other because of a different ideology. We discussed it and recognized Sagada as a multi-political community in which everyone is allowed to have their own political views without being subjected to interrogation or torture by both sides. When we started advocating this, the army did not like it and said there were communists inside the LGU. The NPA said that is part of a CIA program to take the water from where the fish are swimming. There is no bias in the community. Any side has to respect the community. This is a self-determining area. If you're for self-determination, do not force your believes on people if they don't want to take it."* (Biag, interview 04-13).

The morning the military entered the village, I learned about the workings of this degree of autonomy. By entering the *barangay* armed, the AFP violated the MoA that was signed in 1989, as well as a MoA established by the *barangay* itself. The *barangay* captain notified the LGU about the battalion's plan to set up their encampment in the *barangay* and *sanguyan bayan*, the legal arm of the LGU, held an emergency meeting and called the lieutenant with the request to withdraw his the troops from the village the same day. While we were sitting in the *dap-ay* that evening, the 72 of them were walking past, climbing the stairs to the main road.

In the narratives of power that were told in relation to the entrance of the army, the villagers spoke about autonomy and the violation of autonomy. These narratives reveal how they define themselves, as a community, in relation to these armed forces. The NPA is undermining the sovereignty of the Philippines state and its monopoly to use force. The AFP and the NPA are both seeking the sovereignty of the civilians, who are often positioned 'in between' these two armed forces, to gain power. Nevertheless, the communities have a degree of autonomy when it comes to the activity of armed groups in their *barangays*, backed by the LGU that could pressure the AFP and NPA to leave the municipality.

### **Control over natural resources**

*"Today is the first hearing and that is why yesterday evening, the elders decided in a centralized dap-ay meeting to get the four communities together and organize a rally the*

next morning. The barangay captains are busy with arranging everything. People are making signs, in the grass on the side of the road and more and more people gather to attend the rally. An old woman is holding a sign saying "The people united will never be defeated". A barangay official tells the people to form a long row, holding their signs. Most of them are old farmers, but they are very energetic, ready to tell the LGU their opinion on the matter. When the barangay captain gives a sign, the group that consists of circa 120 people, all from the eastern barangays of Sagada, starts walking. In front of the group are seven gong players, dancing on the rhythm of their music. The long row moves slowly, stepping on the rhythm of the gongs. When we get closer to the center of the town, some women start shouting "You own the paper, we own the land!" "We won't let you get it!"<sup>20</sup>. (fieldnotes Kiltapan Rally<sup>21</sup>, 02-21).

"They took advantage of our illiteracy" is the claim of the villagers from Eastern Sagada who were protesting against the privatization of mount Kiltapan. The traditional land use and ownership as regulated by customary law, stands in stark contrast with neoliberal ideas about land as a commodity. "Owning land before depended on how much one could cultivate, we didn't have papers. People owned parcels only, now they own hectares. Land in Sagada is not to be sold. Land is not a commodity! It is part of peoples' lives. Nobody should sell land!" (Ugale, 02-21) an elder exclaimed in his speech on the rally. Many believe that the national law is not suitable for the Cordillera. The people have their own customary laws in which land could be family-owned, clan-owned, dap-ay owned or community owned. Land could be owned through *tawid* (inheritance), improvement or as a reward when a good deed is done for the *ili*. Nowadays, lands are tax declared by individuals without the consultation of the community. It is the task of the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to issue ancestral domain certificates but this commission is often accused of being ineffective or even corrupt. Land declarations cause inequality and conflicts within the communities that increasingly end up in court. As one of my informants told me: *we have traditional ways of settling land disputes. But nowadays people bring it to court and the winner tends to be the one with money.*" (Palpal Latok, interview 02-18). One of my informants was being sued by a powerful family:

*"I went to the uma to cultivate my small piece of land, maybe it's 250 m<sup>2</sup>. We were being sued because we worked on our own saguday. It's my husbands father's*

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<sup>20</sup> The villagers from the northern *barangays* of Sagada and Besao, often identified 'land grabbing' as one of the major issues, their communities face. According to them, lands are declared by the better educated, the wealthier, and people with government positions, without the consultation of the community.

<sup>21</sup> "Kiltapan park' used to be communal land in eastern Sagada but a former congressman bought the land from someone who tax declared it years ago and wants to construct a hotel to accommodate 1.000 tourists. The people fear they won't have access to the sacred ground anymore, once its privatized, and destroyed a fence. They were sued by the owner of the land who took the case to court.

*improvement, who is a member of the saguday. In the saguday, clan members cultivate the land in turns. When someone stops cultivating, someone else could take it over. Nobody cultivated that portion, so my husband cultivated it after his father. But when you cultivate it, it doesn't mean you own it." (Wanay, interview 03-20).*

Besides the increasing land conflicts, there is the Regalian Doctrine that derives from the Spanish colonizers: *"The national law says that slopes of 18 degrees and above are owned by the government, not by the saguday. So we are all squatters because all of us in the Cordillera are living in slopes of 18 degrees and above. So where do we go if the government says it's public land?" (Capuy, interview 03-21).*

The narratives of power on control over natural resources demonstrate that the introduction of tax declarations in the Cordillera has led to a shift in power relations. This shift has caused conflicts within communities and growing inequality as land ownership creates new elites. The narratives reveal that on a local level, there are conflicting interests and alliances when it comes to the control over land. Natural resources are not abundant in Mountain Province and in combination with the entrance of corporations, the people's control over natural resources is increasingly challenged.

### **Power relations and the Sagada-Besao windfarm**

*"One of the reasons we don't like the windmill, is that there might be conflict again. The windfarm company will give taxes to the owners of the land. Langsayan ridge is the boundary between Sagada and Agawa. It will give conflicts about who will get the taxes. The mountains are owned by the community, but when the windfarm is built, some people will declare it as their own. This will cause division in the community. If the windfarm affects the movement of the water and one person owns the land, the whole community is affected, the majority. It's better to have nothing. The unity would be divided. Those who declared in Langsayan will benefit, but when a problem occurs, the whole community is affected. Not only the persons who have the land for the turbines" (Capuy, interview 03-21).*

When the Besao-Sagada windmill park was proposed in 2012, the issue deepened fragmentation and conflict within the communities. A lot of different interests were involved in the issue. On the *barangay* level, the *ili* was divided. In this paragraph I discuss some of the narratives of power that evolved around the windfarm issue. These narratives reveal the incentives for particular people to be pro or against the projects, and how these incentives are embedded in the power relations in the region.



## LAND

As I mentioned above, there are more and more conflicts about land ownership and land use. In the windfarm issue, this conflict is also very present. The company would pay rent to the people who have land declarations on the ridge where the turbines would be constructed. Several families have land declarations up there and would thus personally benefit from the construction of the windfarm. These people who have land declarations tend to be the wealthier, better-educated people. The peasants who directly depend on the resources of the land, notably the watershed that is located on the ridge that provides drinking and irrigation water to most of the northern *barangays* of Besao and Sagada, strongly oppose the project. They fear to lose control over the resources that sustain their livelihoods. One of the farmers claimed: *"When the road will be constructed, they will cut the trees. There will be no trees anymore. The capitalists will take advantage, there are big straight trees there!"* (Bangyay, interview 02-23). Besides the water and the trees, they are afraid that they won't have access to their pasturelands and hunting grounds anymore. Land use and land ownership thus partially determines the people's position regarding the project.

## MILITARY PRESENCE

The implementation of renewable energy projects is often accompanied by militarization to protect the site and the equipment. One of the farmers discussed the possibility of the involvement of the AFP:

*"if PhilCarbon insists, then I don't know what might happen. For example in Abra, where they do a mining operation at the moment. Equipment was brought there, so they put AFP there to guard the equipment. This means there is trouble, a conflict, fear. Here we don't want armed forces to stay in our place. If they plan to stay here we will do our best to drive them away."* (Capuy, interview 03-21).

Besides the AFP, the NPA has a strong presence in Mountain Province. The NPA is currently carrying out a campaign against corporate energy projects and sees PhilCarbon as a legitimate target: *"we had an underground paper published which informed the people of Sagada and Besao, that if they want it, they have to pay revolutionary tax. If they don't want it, the people are supported by the NPA"* (NPA member, 03-22). They warned PhilCarbon that they had to pay revolutionary taxes<sup>22</sup>, if they wanted to push through the project. The NPA also did their own research on the project and secretly

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<sup>22</sup> Revolutionary taxes are imposed by the NPA on corporations that want to do business in areas where they have a strong military presence. *"This is our way to solve agrarian problems. Not a lot of funds go to the farmers, they go to the bureaucracy. But funds are needed for infrastructure and cooperatives. We force the companies to pay tax and channel it to the community."* (NPA member, interview 03-22).

organized consultations in the affected *barangays*, telling the villagers about the possible affects on the environment and trying to convince them to oppose the project. The windfarm issue is not isolated from the national power structures but embedded in the broader conflict between the national government and the communist insurgency

#### THE CORPORATION

PhilCarbon and other corporations that do business in the renewable energy sector, have the possibility to implement projects in the Cordillera because of international power relations that resulted in laws that are beneficial for those corporations. PhilCarbon is a Philippine company with foreign investors that are probably most interested in the profit that could be made from the carbon credits trade. The IPRA law, that is meant to hamper the compromising of indigenous resources by corporations, seems to have quite the opposite effect. The NCIP's task is to facilitate and document the FPIC process to make sure that the affected indigenous people give their free, prior and informed consent. During the windfarm issue, NCIP was accused of siding with the company: *Rich companies just give money to the NCIP in order to approve their applications* (Tulingan, Interview 03-26). I heard multiple complaints about the NCIP withholding important documents, not accepting petitions made by the villagers, distributing flyers about the advantages of the windmills at the town fiesta and not providing clear information about the FPIC process. The villagers complained that they were vague about when the people could give their dissent officially and about the time and location of the meetings. The validity of these claims is reinforced by similar claims about the NCIP in other parts of the Cordillera. It seems like the IPRA law that is meant to protect indigenous populations, works in the advantage of the corporations. The LGUs of Besao and Sagada tend to be in favour of the project because of the 1% royalty share that the company promised, which doesn't include the profit made from the carbon credits trade. This royalty share is welcomed to complement the low budget that is allocated by the national government. The windfarm issue is through the NCIP and the carbon credits trade connected to national and international law and regulations that shape power relations in localities.

#### KINSHIP, GENERATION AND RESPECT

*"Because Biag and Ugale were involved, the community was really confused. They were pro but before they were CPA. It was really difficult for the community"* (Dodo, informal conversation 03-07). Mr. Biag and Mr. Ugale are, what one of my informants calls 'the Sagada fathers': an unofficial group of well-educated, influential people who grew up together. They are all very much respected in the community and used to work for the CPA. Philcarbon strategically chose influential and respected persons from the affected

*barangays* to work for them to convince the affected communities to push through with the project. Since Mr. Biag worked as a representative for the company, his friends and family followed. In Sagada and Besao kinship ties and respect for elders are of major importance. When your friend, family member or a respected person from the community is in favour, people tend to follow out of respect.<sup>23</sup> Despite the respect for elders in the communities of Besao and Sagada, the *dap-ay* did not play a major role in the windfarm issue. Elders were often consulted about their opinion about the windfarm but since most of them did not have any knowledge about windmills it was "*up to the younger generation to decide*". They often pointed out the lack of information about the exact impact of the windfarm and told me they couldn't make a decision, since they were not informed about the effects on the community. Relations of respect, kinship and friendship, serve as an important base for alliances, regardless of the personal interests of the individuals involved.

#### OPPOSITION

On the local level the Sagada-Besao Wind Watch Group that consists of 'concerned community members' played a major role in the opposition. The group is composed of several *Tangguyub*<sup>24</sup> staff members and journalists. The group was formed because of lack of information on the actual effects of the windmills on the communities, and they conducted meetings in which they shared information they found on the internet or friends abroad provided them with. They rejected the Initial Environmental Examination Report (IEER) that PhilCarbon issued, claiming some of its content is false or contradictory and the study insufficient. They also revealed several violations of the FPIC process of NCIP and PhilCarbon. As the company was only presenting the advantages in the FPIC meetings, the Wind Watch Group presented their data about the possible negative effects. They also went to the affected *barangays* and organized information sharings. *Tangguyub* also provided information to the CPA chapter Mt. Province in Bontok, where the project was discussed with the CPA members working there. Besides the Wind Watch Group, the affected communities themselves played a major role in the opposition. Although there was a lot of division within the *barangays*, caused by the windfarm issue, the majority of the community members in the northern *barangays* of Besao and Sagada were opposing the project. On June 5, 2013, a wind measure device was taken down and destroyed by opponents. PhilCarbon has taken away the measure device and has not been seen again after this event. Besides militant action, petitions were distributed, signed and sent to the company and the NCIP. The NPA also

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<sup>23</sup> One of my informants told me about two people who ran for an LGU position. They were relatives and one was much younger than the other. So when the two of them were left and running against each other, the younger person pulled out, out of respect for her older relative. This example points out the importance of kinship ties and generational differences in the political domain.

<sup>24</sup> *Tangguyub* is a peoples organization under the umbrella of the CPA, in Sagada.

significantly reinforced the opposition, by threatening the company and their alliances with militant action. The communities themselves played the biggest role. They organized gatherings to discuss the matter and did their own research to inform themselves. With verbal opposition and militant action they challenged the existing power relations.

In this chapter I mapped the most important power relations that are in play on an international, national-and regional level on the basis of local 'narratives of power'. On a local level a variety of interests and a fragmented sovereignty divide the communities. The IPRA law, the international trade in carbon credits, the armed struggle between the AFP and NPA, and kinship and generational differences; are factors that determine the positions of individuals towards the windfarm that are expressed in narratives of power. On basis of these shared narratives an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) is constructed that politically strengthens the group, as this shared identity can serve as a basis for the mobilization of a powerful network, when the group is threatened. In the next chapter I will look further into the case-study to illustrate how networks are mobilized in micro-politics.

## **CHAPTER 4: The mobilization of networks in micro-politics**

Pagsarmingan (Reflection) II

Maibus iti kwarta  
Ngem saan iti daga  
Ti bunga iti daga  
Awan ti patinggana  
Kakailian kitaen yo  
Saan tayo a paloko  
Umanay a pagsarmingan  
Nakalkaldaang kapadasan

Money runs out  
But not the land  
The fruits of the earth  
are endless  
We should not be fooled  
Our dreadful experience  
Should be enough  
To reflect on<sup>25</sup>

In biopolitics, power relations are (re)constructed through the body and behaviour of the people. People are made subjects in subjectivation processes which make all aspects of their life, political. How do these subjectivation processes work in reality? Which discourses are instrumentalized by the proponents of corporate energy projects? And which discourses shape the struggle against these projects? In this chapter, I will answer these questions on the basis of the windfarm issue in Mountain Province. I will describe the major discourses being used by the proponents of the windfarm, namely the corporation and the government, and the most important discourses being used by the opposition: the discourses that construct indigenous identities that activate networks that help the IPs in the mobilization against these projects.

### **Shaping the discourses: the proponents**

REDTAGGING

*"There is a culture of impunity happening in the Philippines. In terms of killing political activists and red tagging legitimate organizations as fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines, because that's the reason behind all those killings. Philip Alston<sup>26</sup> was able to point that out that the state had a policy, a counter insurgency policy, which in effect targeted not just indigenous peoples, but also legitimate organizations, peoples*

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<sup>25</sup> An excerpt from Pagsarmingan (reflection), a song composed by cultural group Salidummay during the height of the San Roque Dam struggle to share the experience of the Benguet people when the Ambuklao Dam was set up. Translation by: Alma Sinumlag (CWEARC).

<sup>26</sup> Philip Alston is the 'UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions' who was hosted by the CPA in 2007.

*organizations and community leaders who are critical of the government, of government laws.” (Dungo (CPA), interview 03-11).*

Branding people and organizations as ‘NPA’ or ‘redtagging’ is a powerful discourse that is used by the government to legitimize extrajudicial killings by the AFP and other forces. On March 3, the killing of the Ligiw family in Abra by the AFP, shocked the people organizers in Mountain Province. The brothers and father were members of progressive peoples organisations and branded as ‘salaried NPAs’. This powerful and dangerous ‘redtagging discourse’ is not only used by the government and its armed forces, but also by others. In the windfarm issue, the peoples organization ‘Tangguyub’ and individual staff members that were active in the Sagada-Besao Wind Watch Group were several times branded as ‘NPA’ by proponents of the windmill park. I spoke with a man who was suspected by fellow community members of being NPA:

*“AFP and PNP suspect me as NPA. I’m suspicious because I’m here in this place, far away from the neighbourhood. They think NPA always comes to the houses, that NPA is free to come and go here. And villagers also suspect me because in every project that causes damage to nature I say “no!”.*

His story reveals that opposing corporate energy projects in itself could be a reason to be ‘redtagged’. This man also told me that the destruction of the anemometer (the wind measure device installed by the company) created many misunderstandings within the community as *“some people suspected of being NPA, were suspected of being involved.”* This discourse proves to be a powerful tool to put opponents of corporate energy projects out of action.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

The development discourse is another powerful discours that is used by the proponents of the projects. In an interview with PhilCarbon, the spokesperson branded the opposition as ‘anti-development’, ‘anti-clean energy’ and ‘close-minded’ (Oling, interview 03-12). This discourse is also used by proponents of the project in the affected communities, for instance by this police woman who stated that: *“the majority opposed, they don’t like development”* (Lina-ay, interview 04-20). Two of the respected community leaders, who were proponents of the projects, used more or less the same discourse: *“some people are not yet ready to accept a development (...) if the people are not yet ready we have to respect that.”* (Ugale, interview 02-19). *“We went through a lot of consultations and I could feel that they are not ready for this development (...) I advised him that maybe it’s too early for now. The coming generations, maybe later, they won’t be opposed.”* (Biag, interview 04-13). Framing the projects as a ‘development’ for the community is in itself very powerful because of the positive

connotations that the word carries. The 'windfarm project' is often spoken of as isolated from power structures: a project that benefits all.

### **Shaping the discourses: the opposition**

In this paragraph I discuss the most important discourses that shape indigenous identity in the northern *barangays* of Sagada and Besao: narratives of belonging to the land, preserving the environment, customary versus national law, and narratives of resistance.

#### NARRATIVES OF BELONGING TO THE LAND

*"The land should not be sold to others. Our ancestors gave it to their children and their grandchildren, from generation to generation"* (Manalon, informal conversation 02-13). I often encountered ideas that the environment and culture are very much intertwined, as the ancestors of the people have been cultivating those lands since *sang adong* (time immemorial). Statements such as *"That's our inherited land from our ancestors and we must guard it from those who want to destroy our communal lands"* (Elsie, informal conversation, 03-01) shape this 'belonging to the land' discourse. The villagers often connected 'being indigenous' to the land they live on: *"we are indigenous because we were born in the mountains"* (Capuy, interview 03-21) or *"We are called indigenous because we are the natives, the first who inhabited this place."* (Bangyay, interview 03-23). Indigenous identity is thus partially shaped by this connection to the land.

Traditional religious practices all relate to the environment in some way. For example: when an elder, named Ugale, explained me about the purpose of *obaya*, the traditional holiday, he told me *"the people rest and nature rests"* (Ugale, interview 02-19). This quote points out that the people and the environment are not seen as two separate entities. Agriculture is very central to the peoples' lives and the *dap-ay* rice cycle rituals connect the peoples culture with the environment. Some highschool students explained to me why it is important to preserve the natural environment: *"Culture is dependent on nature because what is the use of those rituals if there's no nature. If there are no more ricefields, there will be no more begnas."* (highschool students, focus group discussion 03-19). The close relation between the *kankanaey* and their environment is embodied in the concept of *ili* that could be translated as 'communal territory', 'village life' or 'ancestral land' which points out the close relationship of the people with nature. This is how Ugale explained the concept to me: *"People are really one with the environment. That's why we respect nature, we respect the environment as part of our life, life here is holistic, it's part of the human. You cannot separate the environment from people, you cannot separate the territory from people. So people, the environment, the resources, are one. That's ili"* (Ugale, interview 02-19). The concept of 'ili' embodies the symbiosis of the people and the environment. This symbiosis of nature and culture merges with

Croll & Parkin's (1992) and Ingold's (2000) argument that we should overcome the dichotomy nature-culture as "*human ecology is human society*" (Croll & Parkin 1992: 13). This claim of the IPs connection with nature and the fact that they sustained their natural environment through cultural practices for a long time, plays a major role in the indigeneity discourse that peoples organizations use in order to create space for social contestation.

#### PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT

*"The people here are concerned and willing to defend rivers, forests and mountains. They were punished if they burned the mountain. Cutting trees is limited as well. The people believe that the trees hold the source of water like springs. Hunting is limited as well. The punishment for exceeding these limitations depends on the barangay. At the moment the government helps the barangays to fine persons. The mountains are sensitive. If an individual burns Langsayan, there's a heavy punishment."* (Lomacdag, interview 04-04).

When I asked my informants about their incentives to oppose the windfarm, most of them mentioned the importance of preserving the environment and traditional practices that help sustaining the environment. There are, for instance, rules regarding the use of water sources which prohibit contaminating plants to be planted or houses to be constructed near creeks. The *batangan* system helps preserving the forests that surround the *ili*: respected elders make sure that the *batangans*, the clan-owned forest lands, are used in a sustainable way and that every household gets a fair portion of lumber and firewood. The people value traditional ways of farming and the use of organic fertilizers, although large-scale commercial farming has made its entry in the region. An elder from Sagada told me "*take care of the land because the land takes care of you*". The traditional animist beliefs of the people also help preserving the environment. Sacred trees, rocks and parts of the forests are believed to be inhabited by *anitos*, spirits of the forefathers. If they are disturbed they could cause sickness and bad luck for the community.

#### NARRATIVES OF RESISTANCE

*"Macliing Dulag was killed by a soldier. We know it because of the song, our teachers taught us the song, it's strong for education. It was a popular song before."* The girls sing the first verse of the song. *"It's how they convinced the people to fight for the land of their ancestors. We all know the song."* (highschool students, focus group discussion 03-19). On April 24 1980, Kalinga chieftain Macliing Dulag was shot by the military of the Marcos dictatorship. He became a martyr for the Cordilleran people. There have been many progressive songs written about the Chico Dam Struggle, that still inspire the



younger generations today. The story of the courageous resistance of Macliing Dulag during the Chico Dam struggle is the most famous and popularized 'narrative of resistance' but these narratives go as far back as the resistance of the Cordillerans to the Spanish conquistadores in the 16th century. "*We are indigenous because we were never colonized by the Spaniards*" (Masaybeng, interview 04-03) is a statement if often heard. In Mountain Province, indigenous identity is shaped by a history of resistance to intruders. I encountered narratives of resistance to the Spaniards, the Japanese in the Second World War and the Chico Dams, the Cellophil Logging Company and other corporations in the 80s and 90s. These narratives are very present in current popular culture. When I ask people about the windfarm, they're often referring to their ancestors' struggles. When I asked a woman in Besao about the windfarm, she told me a story about a group of Besao women that successfully stopped a mining corporation on Mount Buasao. After she told me this story, she told me "*We are not in favour of the windfarm. If it is necessary that we women have to go to Langsayan-Pilao ridge, we go. If we have to go to stop the windfarm, we go. If they use arms, we use arms!*" (Elsie, informal conversation 03-01) The connection between the 'narrative of resistance' of the past and the opposition to the windfarm today, points out the way in which these narratives shape the idea of a 'history of resistance' that in turn shapes 'identities of resistance' that are connected to being indigenous.

#### TRADITIONAL VALUES

"*We believe that no man is an island. We need others, to help each other (...) so if there is a problem in the community with other tribes, people are united already. Because of the several activities wherein they work together and talk together, that's uniting people. And if there's a community problem, they can unite as one.*" (Ugale, interview 02-19). Besides these discourses, there are socio-cultural factors that help shaping indigenous identities in the opposition to the windfarm project. There are several traditional *dap-ayan* values that are still strong in the communities and that contribute to the unity of the *ili*. Redistribution is one of the *dap-ayan* values that is preserved. When a pig is butchered, everybody gets his share and when a celebration takes place, the organizers first gather rice in the different households of the community. When you're wealthier, people expect you to contribute more. Most people I interviewed mentioned *ub-ubbo* as the most important value in their community. Constructing houses is a community event in Sagada and Besao and in the planting season women would go from one field to the another to plant rice together. The elders I spoke to, emphasized that these practices are of major importance as they result in a strong and united community. When activities such as rice-planting, the construction of a house or a school, takes place, every

household in the *sitio* (village) is expected to contribute in a way. Because of these redistributive practices and *ub-ubbo*, the *ili* is united when their livelihood is threatened.

The powerful 'redtagging discourse' and 'development discourse' I described above, pose major obstacles for the IPs to resist the destruction of their livelihoods by corporate energy projects. The discourses instrumentalized by the opposition could be seen as part of a 'resubjectivation process' in which new 'regimes of truths' are constructed to contest the 'regimes of truth' of the company, government and proponents. These discourses activate particular shared identities, and could hence mobilize a network to contest the construction of the windfarm. These discourses and community values, are all factors that shape the (indigenous) identities of the *kankanaey* of Mountain Province. Especially the 'narratives of resistance' and the 'narratives of belonging to the land' are strong discourses that in combination with *dap-ayan* values sustain the unity of the communities, shape, mobilize and reinforce the opposition as they are instrumentalized to (re)construct or alter power relations. Unfortunately these *dap-ayan* values and discourses are diminishing. The neoliberal policies, enforced by the WTO and implemented by the Philippine government, have its consequences 'on the ground'. Privatization, 'development' projects and commercial farming cause growing inequality within the communities. The indigenous culture, its traditional values and customary laws are decaying and conflicting interests cause the disintegration of unity within the community. In the struggles of the IPs in the past, there was a clear common enemy, but now division within the communities seems to be increasing. The diminishing of IP culture and environmental degradation go hand in hand, since the two are very much interconnected. These developments pose new difficulties for the Cordilleran IP movement. As local shared identities are disintegrating, unity is increasingly sought on other levels of organization. In the next chapter I explain how a shared political identity can reinforce local struggles.

## **CHAPTER 5: Indigeneity, on the friction between localities and universalities**

Pagsarmingan (Reflection) III

Iti biag mi ket simple  
Pagan-ano mi ti kuryente  
No awan ti masilawan  
A makan ti lamisaan  
Dakayo nga uubbing  
Amirisen a nalaing  
Ti kapadasan idi  
Tapno awan ti babawi  
Ishalupirip nga umili  
Pagsarmingan dakami  
Saan yo nga ipalubos  
Ti ili yo ket malayos

Our life is simple  
What do we need lights for?  
If there is no food  
to be illuminated on the table  
To the young people  
You should reflect  
on the experiences in the past  
to avoid regrets  
People of Dalupirip  
Reflect on our experience  
You should not let your villages  
being drowned<sup>27</sup>

On the local level, in the *barangays* of Besao and Sagada, where I conducted my fieldwork for the greatest part, 'indigenous' identity is not very salient. Identities and discourses that come in play in the opposition to corporate energy projects differ on different 'levels' and in different 'spaces' of struggle. Indigenous identity as a political identity is constructed in an interplay between these different levels of organization. Politicized 'indigeneness' or indigeneity as a type of cultural politics is in the Cordillera constructed through a common indigenous identity: 'Igorot identity', indeed, the discriminatory term that was ascribed to all tribes residing in the Cordillera, by the Spanish *conquistadores* in the sixteenth century. In this chapter I discuss how this common indigenous identity is constructed on the friction between universalities and localities. I argue that this identity is essentially political and that the strength of this identity is reinforced because of its connection to the global indigenous movement and that this identity could alter power relations in a process of social contestation.

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<sup>27</sup> An excerpt from Pagsarmingan (reflection), a song composed by cultural group Salidummay during the height of the San Roque Dam struggle to share the experience of the Benguet people when the Ambuklao Dam was set up. Translation by: Alma Sinumlag (CWEARC).

## A shared history of resistance

The term Igorot was ascribed by the Spaniards because of their resistance to colonization and thus derives from a political project. Because of their history of resistance, Igorot identity is foremost a political identity, an identity that unites the distinct tribes of the Cordillera. Difference between the highlanders and lowlanders also stems from this political project in the past. Before Spanish colonization there were no majority and minorities. This difference is now articulated in the fact of being 'indigenous'. 'Igorot' serves as a political identity in which culture is politicized. I encountered several examples of the politicization of culture. During the rally organized by the Kiltapan people the villagers played the gongs multiple times and perform the indigenous dances. There

are multiple examples of political songs or 'songs of resistance' in the communities that are still sung today, notably the progressive *salidummay* songs. The act of wearing the traditional *gateng* could carry a political



statement, as many women were wearing their traditional clothing during the rally after the women's summit and on Cordiday. Plays are very important for the Cordilleran youth to express themselves about political issues. A young theater maker told me that activist theater has a history in the Philippines. Revolutionary hero Bonifacio was an actor, revolutionaries were recruited in the theater and revolutionary messages were spread through symbolic theater. Visual arts are also important in creating an Igorot identity and framing the struggle. The painting on the above was made by youth from Mountain Province and was exhibited on Cordillera Day. It shows the imperialist plunder of the lands of the Igorots and their courageous resistance against it. The Cordillerans often present themselves as fighters. Most of the tribes have a history of headhunting and American general Douglas McArthur's<sup>28</sup> statement about "those gallant Igorots", is often quoted. A boy from Sagada told me that "*the Americans had lost hope in the war against the Japanese when the Igorots came to the rescue, firing their pistols, sitting on tanks, wearing their g-strings*" (Allikis, informal conversation 04-08). On Cordiday I also encountered this image. A CPA member called in her speech for a "*strong aggressive struggle of people for genuine autonomy. We have to strengthen the militant people's*

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<sup>28</sup> Douglas McArthur was an American general who fought in the Philippines during the second World War with the help of Igorot forces.

*movement to defend our land, life and resources. We have to follow the experience of the Chico Dam struggle. As Macliim Dulag said: "what is the most precious thing to man? Life! If life is threatened, what ought a man do? Fight! This he must do, otherwise he is dishonored. That will be worse than death"* (fieldnotes 04-25).

This 'Igorot identity' is not very salient on the level of the communities. In the barangays the people refer to themselves as *Applai* (the name of the general tribe living in the western part of Mt. Province) or *Kankanaey* (the linguistic group that geographically occupies large parts of Mt. Province and northern Benguet). The name of the own specific subtribe is also widely used to refer to oneself. In the northern barangays of Besao this is the Agawa subtribe and in the northern barangays of Sagada the Pidelisan tribe. Most people are thus categorized as belonging to a certain tribe, based on the place where they were born. Another way of referring to the own community is using the prefix 'i' and the name of the place. The people in Sagada Poblacion often refer to themselves as 'i-Sagada' which means 'residing in Sagada'. Although the term 'Igorot' is not widely used, the people in the communities are aware of the term. They use it when referring to differences between highlanders and lowlanders or when they talk about their history in which their resistance to the Spanish *conquistadores* has a central place.

As Igorot identity was born from a political project, the term is often used to refer to oneself in political situations. For example: a girl from Gueday would refer to herself as *i-Agawa* when in Besao, but when she travelled to Baguio to attend the women's summit on RE, she would tell the women from other provinces that she is from Mountain Province. When speaking on the summit about the common problems the women from the different provinces face, they would refer to themselves as 'Igorot' or 'Cordilleran'. It seems like this term is mostly used in political gatherings or when talking about politics. 'Igorot' as well as 'Cordilleran' serves as a uniting term, which successfully created an imagined community in which people feel connected because of a 'shared history of resistance'.

### **Constructing indigeneity: Cordillera Day**

The CPA plays a very important role in the construction of a 'pan-Cordilleran identity' although they prefer to use the term 'Cordilleran' instead of 'Igorot' because the term Igorot is not self-ascribed and carries negative connotations. They claim that during the Chico Dam Struggle in the 80s, the Cordilleran mass movement was born, because the protests against the construction of the dams united the different tribes. I would not call the Cordilleran movement a mass movement, since on the *barangay* level most people do not feel very connected to their fellow Cordillerans or see themselves as part of a political movement. Although they're not able to reach out to all the communities, the

CPA has definitely established a strong and extensive network of NGOs, peoples organizations and professional groups that strengthens the awareness of the people's common identity and common struggle. It is a uniting force that became visible when I attended the women's summit, partly organized by the CPA women's organization CWEARC, where women from all six different provinces presented the issues regarding RE projects, that they face in their communities.

The annual Cordillera Day that CPA organizes, is of major importance for the creation of this common identity and the framing of the 'people's struggle'. The event originated from the commemoration of martyr Macliim Dulag, who died during the Chico Dam struggle, the most popularized 'narrative of resistance'. In speeches on the event, the Chico Dam struggle was often compared with current struggles against renewable energy projects and extractive industries. This narrative of resistance frames the current struggle and is very central in the construction of a common identity, since the mass movement was 'born' during the Chico Dam struggle in which the people from the different provinces united and took up arms to defend their land.

The picture on the following page was taken on Cordiday and tells a lot about the way in which a pan-Cordilleran identity is constructed. The letters on the banner in the upper left corner say "resist imperialist plunder of our land and resources! Assert our right to self-determination!". Angry women and men are raising their fists in the air, ready to fight: the Igorots are depicted as a courageous people. On the stage sit several board members of the CPA and elders from the hosting Guinaang tribe. The women are wearing their traditional *tapis* (an example of culture as an act of resistance). On the foreground, a moment captured from the play that was performed by DKK, a youth organization that stands for the preservation of indigenous culture and works with activist artists and children. At the captured moment, the Philippine army is gun pointing the leaders of the *ili* in which the story takes place. In the corner, Wanay, a woman whose husband was killed by the army before, is mourning, holding her baby son. It is an image that strongly reminds of the popular 'Chico Dam Struggle' in which the army killed Macliim Dulag whose courageous fight is commemorated on Cordiday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, the day of his death 30 years ago. This image provoked a lot of emotion by the crowd composed of numerous tribes from all over the Cordillera and beyond. It is an image where everybody feels connected, for it is part of their histories and lives in the Cordillera nowadays. A common feeling of being oppressed by the national government is a powerful factor in the shaping of the identity of the people attending Cordiday.



The banner on the right is an informative banner about the impact of Chevron's energy projects to Indigenous Peoples. The corporate energy projects are being implemented all over the Cordillera and U.S. company Chevron is one of the big players. Sharing knowledge is one of the main purposes of Cordiday, not only to learn from each other's struggles but also to reinforce the feeling that 'you don't stand alone in this'. The struggle against corporate energy projects is a struggle in which all provinces take part. These projects are relatively new for the Cordilleran people, but the common problems with these projects have become an important factor in the creation of a common identity. The banner in the center calls for justice for William Bugatti, a CPA member who was killed in Ifugao during the time I conducted my fieldwork. Political killings are part of the grievance mechanism that help shaping this identity. In all provinces of the Cordillera, political extrajudicial killings have taken place in the past and are still taking place, as this banner reminds us.

This one picture tells something about how the construction of indigeneity works. The people watching, could identify with the play and the banners, which gives them the idea of the commonness of their problems. They could relate to these images which create a common identity, that comes to the surface in particular (political) contexts. This identity

gives them the feeling of being part of a broader struggle and gives thus strength that reinforces the local struggles 'back home'.

Igorot identity serves as the foundation of the indigenous movement of the Cordillera. On Cordillera Day this identity is constructed and reinforced in an interplay between universalities and localities. On this day indigenous peoples from all over the world and thousands of indigenous peoples from the Cordillera come together. An international indigeneity discourse is mixed with the particularities of the struggle of the Cordillerans which results in a political identity that has both 'local' and 'universal' characteristics of 'being indigenous'. This 'in between' position is what makes igorot identity such a powerful tool to alter power relations. In the following paragraph I discuss how this 'indigeneity' influences the struggles 'on the ground'.

### **Between the grassroots and the global**

An important way of strengthening movements, such as the opposition to corporate energy projects in Mountain province, is connecting the struggles 'on the ground' to 'higher' levels. This is exactly what the work of CPA involves: connecting the different levels of organizing. Via the CPA network the peoples organizations on the barangay level are connected to organizations on the municipal and provincial level such as Tangguyub and CPA Mountain Province. These organizations are connected to the regional level that encompasses all six provinces of the Cordillera, to the national level and the international level. This extensive network reinforces the struggles on the ground, since there is a constant interaction between these levels. Through this network, all different sectors of society are mobilized: the urban poor, the women, students, elders, peasants, etc.

The challenge of working on all these different levels is what I call 'the grassroots problem'. On these different levels, different discourses and different identities become salient. 'Igorot' or 'Cordilleran' identity is barely expressed on the *barangay* level, but becomes important on regional, national and international conferences. In the *barangays* people do not feel connected to an international struggle and do not see similarities between the problems they face as an IP and the problems of other IPs abroad. This poses the following question: is the movement grassroots or organized 'from above', from the CPA office in Baguio? The women who attended the Indigenous Women's Summit on Renewable Energy, for instance, were clearly organized by municipal and provincial chapters of the CPA. Tangguyub staff members went to the *barangays* to ask the women to attend the summit. This seems top down, but the issues that the women face 'on the ground' are the main reason for them to attend the summit and without strong leadership 'on the ground' they would never been able to organize the mobilization. It is not 'one way traffic' but there is a constant interaction between those



different levels of organizing, in which the challenge is, to keep 'the gaps' as narrow as possible.

The CPA network definitely reinforced the opposition to the windfarm on the ground. There is a constant flow of information about renewable energy projects between the different levels. Apit Tako for instance, the peasants movement that is also under the umbrella of the CPA, was at the time of my fieldwork very involved in the renewable energy projects. They did a lot of research on how the projects on the ground relate to national law (REA, EPIRA) and connects to 'the international' (carbon credits trade, the liberalization of the market enforced by international institutions etc.). To be able to connect these levels in their research, they needed information 'from the ground' which was provided by peoples organizations involved in the local struggles. Information was shared via the 'levels in between', for example the provincial chapters of CPA that are actively exchanging information to both sides. The newly generated information that follows from the analysis of Apit Tako flows back to the local struggles in multiple ways. In the case of Apit Tako, they informed different tribes about the incentives for and effects of RE projects during the Cordilleran Women's Summit as well as Cordiday. They presented their data to indigenous peoples from different communities in an 'energy workshop' in which they showed a powerpoint and initiated a discussion. The results from the discussion provide new information for Apit Tako that they can add to their research. This structure, in which knowledge flows back and forth, is essential in strengthening the movements on the ground. This is also the case in the windfarm issue, in which Tangguyub played a major role in this information sharing network. They shared information 'down' to the people's organizations' and 'up' to CPA chapter Mt. Province and the regional office in Baguio. These flows of information strengthen each level. I am now describing the vertical movement of information but, of course, there is a horizontal movement of information as well on every level. This horizontal flow of information becomes visible when the peoples organizations gather information in 'their communities' and organize community activities such as workshops. The whole network strongly depends on strong peoples organizations on the ground that work in a horizontal way on the community level. On other levels there is horizontal movement of information as well. The CPA is connected to other (IP) organizations, networks and NGOs on a national level. And the CPA and its sister organizations IPMSDL and AIPP<sup>29</sup> have horizontal ties with other international organisations with whom they constantly interact.

Not only information moves along these lines, but also people themselves. For the mobilization for the centralized Cordillera Day for instance, members of Tangguyub went to different *barangays* to inform the leaders of peoples organizations about the event.

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<sup>29</sup> The Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation and Asia's Indigenous Peoples' Pact are two international organizations that originated in the Philippines and have close ties with CPA.

These local leaders in their turn informed the different sectors of the population. The Tangguyub staff members brought invitations that were sent by the regional office in Baguio and in the week before Cordiday one of Tangguyub's staff members went to CPA chapter Mt. Province to talk about who would cover which area in the mobilization process. Transport was arranged by the peoples organizations in the *barangays* in cooperation with Tangguyub. The strong connections between all these levels and the horizontal and vertical movements of information and people, make such an effective mobilization possible. Through these connections, issues from the grassroots level are brought up to the international level via the network of CPA and from the international level back again to the grassroots level. As I mentioned before, the struggle on these different levels is framed in different ways, and different identities become salient on these different levels and spaces.

### **The strength of indigeneity**

Constructing indigeneity, relating to the global indigenous discourse, is an important way of strengthening the movement for indigenous rights and self-determination. As I mentioned above, I have not found these transnational indigeneity discourses on the *barangay* and municipal levels of organizing. Nevertheless, international indigeneity discourses, are very present in the CPA discourse. International solidarity work has been part of CPA's work since they were born in 1984. During the Chico Dams struggle, they already sought contact with international human rights workers, Church networks and other IP movements with similar problems. It seems like the 'transnational discourse of indigeneity' becomes important on the 'higher' levels of organization. In the CPA office in Baguio the walls are full of posters of international (IP) organizations and some members told me about the importance for 'international solidarity work' for their movement. Although there's this discrepancy in the way the struggle is framed on different levels, the use of these different discourses reinforces the struggles on the ground. When the struggle is framed as an international struggle of indigenous peoples defending their lands and lives against imperialist plunder, a worldwide common struggle is created which serves as a broad foundation. The struggle has to be framed in a different way in order to expose the commonalities between the different struggles such as the colonial history of the IPs, the diminishing of their culture, the militarization of their territories, the conversion of land for extractive industries and renewable energy projects, a history of being discriminated against et cetera. In the creation of a global indigenous identity, the same mechanisms play a role as in the creation of a pan-Cordilleran identity: looking for commonalities to create sympathy and to reinforce the worldwide struggle.

International solidarity is a very important tool for the Cordilleran IP movement to reinforce the local struggles. The interconnection with the international IP movement is

embodied in CPA's international sister organizations, such as IPMSDL and AIPP but also in CPA's involvement in the UN workgroup for IPs in which they contributed to the drafting of UNDRIP. Because of the worldwide web, information is shared easily and supporting each other's campaigns is increasingly done in these new spaces on the internet. The presence of international delegates is also important in monitoring the situation, especially in cases where there is no freedom of press. The Philippines has become an increasingly dangerous country to work in for critical journalists (HRW world report, 2014: 378). Researchers, journalists and interns from abroad help monitoring the local situation. In case of the Cordilleran Indigenous movement, migrant kin abroad plays a role in the generations of funds and the creation of awareness on the international level about issues of indigenous peoples. Moreover, the sharing of knowledge is important because of the connection of the indigenous movements to the very same worldwide economic and political developments that cause similarities in their local struggles.

During the international 'AIPP workshop for indigenous peoples on extractive industries, energy and human rights', a strong anti-imperialist, anti-corporate capitalism and anti-neoliberal globalization discourse was used by all of the attendees which points out the awareness about the interconnectedness of the local IP struggles and these worldwide developments. Another important discourse was the 'belonging to the land discourse' that I also encountered on the community level. One of the international solidarity attendees said in her speech: *"Stop destroying mother nature, respect her and she will nurture you well, as well as the generations to come"* (Sita, 04-21). This discourse also seems to be powerful on the international level.

Case-studies were presented from different countries and compared to each other. One of these case-studies was the windfarm case, which was presented by Tangguyub. This is a very clear direct connection between the grassroots and the international. Several delegates from Sagada and Besao also attended the workshop to gain a deeper understanding of their own struggle, comparing it to struggles of the other IPs. They felt empowered because of the realization that all these different delegates from different indigenous tribes from Asian and non-Asian countries are fighting a similar fight. "Being indigenous" was also something that was expressed often during the workshop. Indigenous performances were held in which traditional attires were worn and people from other tribes were encouraged to join the performance. The workshop lasted for two days but there was a lot of energy during those two long days. The feeling of being empowered derived from simply being together and sharing stories. On some moments during the workshop, this feeling of empowerment was clearly articulated. One of the attendees, Alegría, a women's leader from the Sapara nation living in the Ecuadorian Amazon, feared for her life because of intimidation and threats from the Ecuadorian government. On the second day of the workshop, she told the other delegates that she

was not afraid anymore now she had attended the workshop, and that she did not care if she would be jailed, she would continue her struggle.

Because of the international solidarity actions in which CPA is involved, the local struggles are automatically reinforced, as they are also part of this network of information sharing and cooperation. If the international solidarity work strengthens CPA, and it does, it means it automatically strengthens the local struggles in the Cordillera through this network in which information flows back and forth between different levels and spaces. The windfarm issue was one of the case-studies presented during the workshop. Because the workshop was organized in Sagada, a lot of *i-Sagada* were attending the workshop as well. The knowledge they gained, could help them in future struggles and simply being there makes them feel empowered. Moreover, international gatherings like these, are possible because of strong leadership on the ground which makes it possible to research the issues and mobilize delegates.

### **The dangers of indigeneity**

Does indigeneity create hopeful spaces for altering the neoliberal system we live in, or are these cultural politics an integral part of the neoliberal system, in which the indigenous peoples are slowly incorporated, through the institutionalization of indigeneity? In this paragraph I elaborate on the critiques of Hale (2005) and Ghosh (2006).

Ghosh claims that international indigeneity discourses result in 'global indigenism' in which indigenous identities are presented in a neoprimitivist, essentialist and romanticized manner. The indigeneity discourse in the Cordillera is shaped by universal and local factors. The common characteristics of the people are emphasized to create a bond but in my observation they are not 'romanticized'. They are as they are in reality. CPA is against all types of cultural misrepresentation and does not alter cultural practices or symbols in some sort of form of 'global indigenism' as described by Ghosh. Different tribes from the Cordillera didn't portray themselves in an essentialist or stereotypical way that Ghosh (2006) calls 'global indigenism'. Of course, there are powerful commonalities but there is a lot of respect for particularities. During Cordiday not all tribes were able to present themselves separately because of the time limit, so the performances were divided per province. All the provinces have their own particularities and this was made very visible because of this distinction. In their speeches people spoke about Cordillerans and Igorots and the importance of unity among the different tribes of the Cordillera but during the performances their sovereignty to their tribe and particular region became more salient. The Igorot / Cordilleran identity is salient when talking about politics but when talking about culture or 'doing' culture there is attention for the particularities of

the different tribes. Besides the identities that become salient in different contexts, sovereignty also switches from the tribe, to the Igorots, to the nation, to the indigenous people worldwide. When looking for these 'broader' identities and sovereignty, common symbols become increasingly important. An example of this is the traditional dress that all Igorots wear. Although the different woven patterns point out the different tribes they belong to, the traditional attires are real commonalities between the different tribes and not stereotypes. This is not indigenism but a realistic international solidarity in which connections are built on commonalities, but in which differences are equally respected. The struggles may be similar but during the AIPP workshop there was the consensus that the same tactics may not work in different contexts. Both, the regional Igorot identity and global indigenous identity indigeneity are nurtured by local discourses and there will always be an overlap between the discourses used on the local levels and regional and international levels. Transnational indigenous movements draw their legitimacy from these localities and therefore they will always move between universalities and localities.

Hale (2006) argues that indigenous movements can become a nightmare when they are incorporated in the neoliberal system that they claim to fight through the institutionalization of indigeneity. An example of this institutionalization are the laws that as a product of the politics of identity pacify the IPs and incorporate them in the powerstructures of the state. CPA already experienced the disappointment after the IPRA laws passed, as nothing really changed because of the new laws. They are furthermore very critical of the NCIP. Several speakers on Cordidday called for the abolishment of the commission. CPA already experienced some of the 'nightmares' predicted by Hale and sees this incorporation through laws as IPRA as a learning point. They do not regard 'acquiring indigenous peoples rights' as their end goal and they do not solely focus on international institutions such as the UN in their struggle but on alliances with other grassroots organizations. During Cordidday, several speakers stressed that they should not focus too much on UNDRIP but that there are also other ways of asserting the rights of indigenous peoples. CPA is quite an advanced movement among the IP movements. They seem to be aware of the danger of conforming to neoliberal structures and drew their lessons from IPRA, acknowledging that genuine autonomy for the Cordilleran Indigenous Peoples could only be achieved in a state structure of genuine national democracy. In their eyes the regional and national struggle are very much connected and the focus therefore, does not only lie on cultural politics. They are beyond the point described by Hale but now they have to learn how to deal with it.

## **CONCLUSION**

Instrumentalizing indigeneity proves to be a very viable way to alter power relations, especially when this indigeneity is connected to 'universals' but there is a danger that the IPs are pacified with group laws based on the claimed cultural difference which incorporates them in the very same neoliberal structure that they claim to fight. Indigeneity has been important in the Cordillera as far back as the Chico Dam Struggle. It creates an imagined community and thereby bonds between different tribes. Indigenous identity is the identity upon which the whole network of the CPA is based. The content of this identity, the discourses that are being used, are very important to sustain this network but differ when looking at different levels of organization, on which different identities and sovereignties become salient. The Chico Dam was the first renewable energy project to be successfully opposed by the people, with help of this common Igorot identity. This narrative of resistance still shapes the current struggle and identity of the Cordillerans today. It is hard to tell whether the windfarm was successfully opposed because of this indigeneity but indirectly it definitely played a significant role, since the CPA network is based upon this powerful indigenous identity. People's organization Tangguyub played a big role in the opposition being reinforced by other networks and organizations and local discourses that shape indigenous identity. The global indigenous movement reinforces the local struggles through the CPA network, as indigeneity is constructed on the friction between localities and universalities in which universals such as 'climate change' and 'being indigenous' interconnect with localities, such as a struggle against the construction of a windfarm in the Philippines. Knowledge and people move in between these localities and universalities and local discourses such as 'narratives of resistance' and 'belonging to the land' mingle with global discourses of indigeneity and climate change, creating new discourses. On these frictions, where the global and local confluence, spaces emerge in which new indigenous identities are constructed. This can be seen as a 'resubjectivation process' in which a new 'government of truth' creates space for social contestation. In these 'encounters across difference', powerful alliances are created that influence the 'localities' in a constant interplay between different levels of organization. These encounters could lead to new arrangements of culture and power. The power of indigeneity could thus counter the governmentality, biopolitics and its subjectivation processes of the state (local) and the neoliberal system (global). At the basis of indigeneity lie cultural politics that inevitably work with a mechanism of in- and exclusion that is inherent in the system of 'neoliberal multiculturalism' we live in today. 'Universal cultural politics' constitute neocolonialism and imperial schemes as well as the mobilization of the marginalized as there is no clear distinction between 'techniques of the self' and 'techniques of domination' but a constant interaction. Power relations and discourses play a major role in the way indigeneity is

shaped. Indigeneity can create spaces for social contestation in which power relations are altered but there are limitations within the neoliberal system. Nevertheless, these spaces could provide knowledge and insights that can reinforce the worldwide movements against neoliberal globalization and corporate capitalism

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## **APPENDIX A) Glossary of indigenous terms and places**

*Agawa* = One of the northern barangays of Besao that would be affected by the construction of the PhilCarbon windfarm. Agawa is also the name of the tribe living in the northern barangays of Besao.

*Amam a* = the male elders

*Ambeon Bato* = a sacred stone in Gueday that is part of the stone calendar, it is located on Pilao-Langsayan ridge where the windmills will be built.

*Americano* = the word used to refer to 'white person', regardless whether you're from America or another country.

*Anitos* = spirits of the forefathers who inhabit groves, watersources, forests and stones.

*Applai* = general tribe living in western mountain province (Sagada, Besao).

*Bahag* = a woven g-string, the traditional Igorot clothing.

*Baguio* = the capital of the Cordillera Administrative Region in Benguet Province.

*Bangaan* = One of the northern barangays of Sagada that would be affected by the construction of the PhilCarbon windfarm

*Bangui* = the place in Ilocos Norte where a windfarm was constructed along the coastline.

*Barangay* = a village within a municipality, the smallest administrative unit in the Cordillera.

*Batangan* = a family or clan owned forestland.

*Bayanihan* = a community effort / cooperation

*Begnas* = indigenous rituals

*Besao* = One of the municipalities of Mountain Province.

*Camote* = sweet potatoes, the traditional food of the inhabitants of mountain province. Camote are cultivated in the *uma*.

*Cordillera* = the mountainous region located on the northern tip of Luzon Island that comprises the provinces of Apayo, Kalinga, Ifugao, Mountain Province, Benguet and Abra.

*Dap-ay* = the ISPS in mountain-province. A place for common decision making, performing rituals and knowledge sharing in which the *amam a*, male elders, are the leaders. It is also an organisational structure within the community, as a family you 'belong' to a particular dap-ay.

*Galatis* = free labor (different from *ub-ubbo*, which is exchange of labor).

*Gateng* = traditional woven dress for women.

*Gueday* = One of the northern barangays of Besao that would be affected by the construction of the PhilCarbon windfarm.

*Igorot* = indigenous inhabitant of the Cordillera, derives from 'I golot' which means 'people residing in the mountains'. The term was ascribed by the Spanish Colonizers and has a negative connotation for some IPs.

*i-Agawa* = the people from / residing in Agawa.

*i-Sagada* = the people from / residing in Sagada.

*Ili* = a term that encompasses both the community and the environment where the community lives in.

*Imim a* = the female elders

*Inayan* = stands for everything that's taboo. Taboo is when one thinks about personal interests instead of the good of the community.

*Kankanaey* = the language spoken in Mountain Province and the northern part of Benguet. The term is also used as a common name for the different tribes that speak the language.

*Lacmaan* = One of the northern barangays of Besao that would be affected by the construction of the PhilCarbon windfarm

*Obaya* = a traditional holiday that marks the start or end of a new phase of the agricultural cycle.

*pala-ayowan* = caretaker of the batangan, usually a respected elder from the clan.

*Pidelisan* = One of the northern barangays of Besao that would be affected by the construction of the PhilCarbon windfarm

*Pilao-Langsayan* = the ridge where the windfarm would be constructed, located on the boundary of Sagada and Besao municipalities.

*Sagada* = One of the municipalities of Mountain Province.

*Saguday* = clan-, family- or dap-ay owned land

*Sang adong* = "since time immemorial"

*Sanguyan Bayan* = the legal arm of the LGU.

*Sitio* = a cluster of households within a barangay.

*Tapis* = traditional woven skirt for women

*Ub-ubbo* = cooperation

*Uma* = slash and burn field used to cultivate root crops.

## **APPENDIX B) List of abbreviations**

CAR = Cordillera Autonomous Region

AIPP = Asia's indigenous people's pact

AFP = Armed Forces Philippines

CADT = Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title

CALT = Certificate of Ancestral Land Title

CPA = Cordillera People's Alliance

CPP = Communist Party of the Philippines

CWEARC = Cordillera Women Education, Action and Research Center

DoE = Department of Energy

EPIRA = Electric Power Industry Reform Act

FPIC = Free Prior Informed Consent

ICC = Indigenous Cultural Community

IEER = Initial Environmental Examination Report

IPMSDL = Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation

IPRA = Indigenous Peoples Rights Act

ISPS = Indigenous Socio Political System

LGU = Local Government Unit

MoA = Memorandum of Agreement

NCIP = National Commission of Indigenous Peoples.

NPA = New Peoples Army

PNP = Philippine National Police

RE = Renewable Energy

REA = Renewable Energy Act

UNWGIP = Working Group Indigenous Populations (UN)

TFIP = Task Force Indigenous Peoples

UNDRIP = United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples